

DIAMOND~DICK

BOYS BEST

JR WEEKLY JR

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 290.

Price, Five Cents.

DIAMOND DICK AND THE TIMBER THIEVES

OR
A CLOSE CALL IN CUSTER'S CANYON



DIAMOND DICK CAUGHT THE YOUNG SPORT'S HAND AND THEY WERE WHIRLED ALONG THROUGH A HAIL OF BULLETS.

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NEW YORK, May 3, 1902.

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Diamond Dick and the Timber Thieves;

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A CLOSE CALL IN CUSTER'S CANYON.

By the author of "DIAMOND DICK."

CHAPTER I.

PROFESSOR FINNEGAN, OF MEDICINE HAT.

"Pull in thet hoss, thar! You in the piug dicer I'm a talkin' to."

"Me?"

"Who else? Ain't ye a-lookin' inter the end o' this hyer forty-five?"

"My good man-----"

"Don't ye call me a good man! I'm the toughest propersition thet ever happened in this part o' Arizona. Chuck Evans is my handle, an' they call me the Curly-headed Cauliflower from San Simone. I'm a terror to all the tin-horns an' piug-uglies o' these parts, thet's what I am."

"Well, sir, allow me to inform you that I'm neither a tin-horn nor a piug-ugly. I'm a scientist engaged in scientific pursuits. Have the kindness to

divert the muzzle of that firearm from my person, remove yourself from my path and thus allow me to proceed."

"Say, an ombray would think ye wasn't a six-spot ter hear ye throw it inter me. What do ye name yerself?"

"Professor Finnegan, of Medicine Hat, Head Gameril of the Learned Push known as the Anti-quarians."

"Bosh! You're Red Ferg, Boss of the United Order of Touchers and Grafters, at present engaged in manufacturing red-eye of the moonshine variety. The Government has offered \$500 fer yer capture, an' as I'm on the make, this mornin', I reckon I'll take you in."

"This is an outrage!"

"Mebbe it is, but I'll give it to you good an'

plenty, Fergus, if you try any tricks. Turn yore cayuse ter the left an' ride a length ahead o' me. A half a mile an' then ye'll come ter my ranch. I'm the deperty sher'f, ef it'll ease yer mind any ter know it."

A short, little man, thin of form and cadaverous of face, wearing an old-fashioned high hat and a clerical suit of black, was riding along an irrigation ditch in Southern Arizona—roads in that section usually following the ditches—and had been suddenly accosted by a gentleman in velveteen trousers, flannel shirt and sombrero. This gentleman had a very business-like air and also a gun.

The foregoing conversation then ensued, and Professor Finnegan, after using all the arguments he could muster, finally yielded to force and turned his horse under protest.

"What makes you think I'm Red Ferg?" inquired the professor, as he rode along.

"I received a tip from the sher'f at Phoenix ter look out fer a man who had one white eyebrow an' t'other red or black. Thet's yerself, pilgrim."

This point in the indictment was well covered by the professor.

His eyebrows were of the character described—which was strange but none the less true and unfortunate.

"I have papers upon my person which will convince you that I'm what I claim to be—Professor Finnegan, of Medicine Hat."

"Ye'll hev a chanst ter perdooce yer dockyments at the proper time."

"Isn't there any one around here who knows this Red Ferg, as you call him?"

"Over at Ridgley's place thar's a man named Escomb."

"Then I demand that you take me to him."

"Demand as much as ye durn please."

"Won't you do it?"

"Shore not."

"But I'm in this section on a scientific mission."

"All right."

"My work will not admit of delay."

"It'll hev ter."

The professor threatened and pleaded and finally secured the promise of his captor to go for Escomb and bring him to see the professor; but to take the professor to see Escomb was something that Chuck Evans would not consent to for a moment.

Half a mile from the main trail brought the two horsemen to an adobe hut on the banks of the canal.

A pleasant enough place it was, in a primitive way, the yard filled with Adriatic fig trees and covered with a thick mat of Bermuda grass.

The clear waters of the canal flowed shimmeringly by and the entire place had an atmosphere of plenty and contentment.

Two foxhounds, savage in their deportment toward the professor, but over-friendly toward Chuck Evans, ran out to greet them.

"This hyer's my place," said Chuck, "an' hyer's whar I've got ter leave ye fer two days."

"Two days?" echoed the man from Medicine Hat.

"It'll take me thet length o' time ter fetch Escomb."

"And I'm to remain here for two days," groaned Finnegan; "my hunt for the great stone idol of Talloc is to suffer a delay of two days! *Mirabile dictu!*"

Those last two words were something new in the swearing line. Chuck had never heard them before, and he cast a suspicious look at his prisoner, as though thinking he might be trying to work some sort of a hocus pocus.

In the yard, Finnegan was made to dismount while the horse was being tethered.

The hounds unlipped their white fangs and pressed dangerously near to the learned man, but slunk back at a word from their master.

Finnegan's horse was secured with a picket rope whose length gave the animal access to hay and water, and the prisoner was then made to enter the one room which comprised the interior of the adobe house.

There was no woman there.

"I'm what ye call a bach," grinned Chuck;

"when I'm away on biz the dorgs take keer o' the place."

After pulling a pair of leg irons and some ten feet of chain out from under a bunk, the deputy made the professor pass out into the yard once more, and halt under a fig tree that grew within three feet of the irrigation canal.

The bark of the tree was much scarred and chafed and the grass not a little trampled.

"Sit down!" commanded Chuck Evans.

The prisoner dropped down and leaned his back against the tree trunk.

The deputy then adjusted the leg irons and made the chain fast to the tree with a padlock.

"Now, pilgrim," went on Chuck Evans, retreating in a few steps in the direction of the place where he had left his horse, "I'll start out an' look fer Escomb."

"It will take you two days, will it?"

"Thet's what I told ye."

"I'll starve to death while you're gone."

"Not on yer life, unless ye're too lazy ter help yerself. Thar's figs over yer head—more'n ye can eat in a month; water ter drink in the canal an' nice soft grass ter sleep on. You ain't the fust ombray thet's been kept in this place, not by a long shot."

The professor's face lighted up as a happy thought passed through his brain.

"I give you warning, sir," said he, "that I will ask the first person who passes to release me."

"Keno! Ask all ye want ter. Persons don't pass hyer so frequent as ye opine; an' ef they do, Cinch an' Rocket'll be left on guard." Evans waved his hand toward the hounds. "They won't let ye be interfered with, Fergus. *Adios* to ye."

Chuck Evans gave a parting salute, but the professor took no notice of word or gesture.

He was irritated, and had half a notion to send a bullet after the deputy.

A few minutes later and the deputy sheriff was gone.

Cinch lay on one side of the professor and Rocket

on the other, both dogs watching for any bolt toward freedom on the prisoner's part.

The professor heaved a heavy sigh of disappointment.

Ever since he had left Medicine Hat on this important mission, he had been baffled by delays.

He had lost twenty-four hours through a railroad wreck, had missed connection with a train at Ash Fork and had thus chalked up six more hours to the bad, after that a burning trestle had caused another six hours of delay, and then he had had a runaway on departing in a mountain wagon from Phoenix, and now, pursuing his mission on horseback, he was mistaken for an outlaw and sidetracked for two days.

As he sat on the ground, his back against the tree, his thoughts dwelling on his misfortunes, the shade, the cool wind, the rippling waters, the balmy air, all conspired to put him into a drowse.

He slept and forgot his troubles.

In a few hours he was awakened—a voice having reached his ears from the road.

"Gle-ory to snakes an' all sashay! Hello, you feller in the plug-cady! Hev we got ter git a cannon ter wake ye up?"

The professor rubbed his eyes and looked toward the road.

He gave a start of surprise and then rubbed his eyes and looked again.

His sight had not deceived him.

There were three horsemen drawn up at the fence, all most excellently mounted and somewhat covered with the dust of the desert.

One had iron-gray hair and mustache, and sat his mount like a Centaur, and, with a younger individual, wore a peculiar dress, half-Mexican, half-American, which set off their lithe figures to greatest advantage.

The costumes were studded with diamonds.

The third member of the party, the one who had spoken, had long, red hair and a red beard, and was a veritable giant of a man.

The professor plucked up heart and began to think that fate was at last inclined to be kind to him.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I'm thet rip-roarin' ole propersition known as the Sarpint o' Siskiyou," replied the giant, "an' these hyer gents I'm travelin' with aire known as the Diming Dicks, of Ouray."

The professor jerked off his hat and tossed it into the air.

"Hurrah!" he cried.

His ray of hope had brightened.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROFESSOR AGAIN DISAPPOINTED.

"Well, look!" exclaimed the astonished Handsome Harry. "Ye'd think some 'un had passed him a hundred!"

"Who are you?" inquired Diamond Dick.

"Professor Finnegan, of Medicine Hat!"

"Blazes ter blazes an' six-hands 'round!" cried Harry. "Ef I had my ch'ice between six years in the pen an' two in Medicine Hat, I'd take the pen. Shore I would. Let's ride on. Ef we linger around hyer an' talk with thet dub we'll git Jonahed."

"Don't go!" pleaded the professor, balancing himself on his manacled legs. "I want to talk with Diamond Dick."

"What are you doing there, professor?" put in old Diamond Dick.

"Waiting for some one to happen along and release me. Are you Diamond Dick?"

"Yes."

"Well, I have a letter for you. Set me free so that I may present it."

"First tell us why you are a prisoner."

"I was mistaken for a villain known as Red Ferg —"

Handsome Harry exploded a laugh, in which the young sport joined.

A smile flickered about the old veteran's lips.

"Why," said Diamond Dick, "you're only about half the size of Red Ferg."

"But I've got a white eyebrow."

"So I see, and it's the only point of resemblance."

"If you're going to remain long in this section,

professor," spoke up the young sport, "I'd advise you to make that white eyebrow the same shade as the other. That's what Red Ferg himself has probably done, although no one in this section seems to have credited him with sense enough."

The professor then went on to tell how he had been captured and left there for a space of two days while his captor went after a man named Escomb.

"There certainly has been a mistake here," remarked old Diamond Dick, throwing his bridle reins to Bertie and dismounting.

Climbing the fence, he started toward Finnegan, but Cinch and Rocket bristled the hair on their necks and lined up to dispute his passage.

"Better toss your letter to me," said the old veteran.

Finnegan tied the letter up in his handkerchief, together with a small stone, and flung the packet to Diamond Dick.

The latter caught it, took out the letter, opened the unsealed envelope and read as follows:

"Mr. Richard Wade, Ouray—

"The bearer, Professor Finnegan, is all right. Personally, I think he's a little bughouse on the subject of American antiquities, and he's going to your section to hunt for an idol or something. Treat him kindly, see that he doesn't get hurt and thus oblige an old friend,

ELI OLIVER."

Oliver was a Montana man whom Diamond Dick knew very well and respected highly.

"This is all right, Finnegan," said Diamond Dick, putting the letter in his pocket. "Have patience for a little while and we'll release you."

The veteran turned to Harry.

"You take care of the dogs, Harry. Don't kill the brutes—just retire them until we can get Finnegan out of this trouble of his."

Diamond Dick thereupon passed into the house.

By the time Dick showed himself again, Harry had roped the two foxhounds and tied them, snarling and gasping, to a fence post.

The old veteran had gone into the house to look for a key to the leg irons; or, failing to find that, for

a sledge or an ax with which to break the chain or the padlock.

He found neither a key nor a sledge, but he chanced upon a big file, and half an hour of steady work with this made the professor a free man.

Finnegan heaved a deep breath of relief as he got up, shook off the irons and stretched his cramped limbs.

"I am under many obligations to you," said he, shaking hands all around. "Where are you gentlemen riding, may I ask?"

"We have been out in the hills looking at a mine," replied Diamond Dick, "and are now on our way back to Ouray."

"I wonder if you would help me in my search, gentlemen?"

The professor turned a glance at Harry, who was feeding figs to the three horses, then at Bertie, and then at old Diamond Dick.

"You can tell us about your search while we are riding toward Ouray," answered the veteran. "I'd do anything for a friend of Oliver's."

This answer put the little man in good humor, and he trotted off to get his horse.

While he was securing his animal, the Serpent of Siskiyou went to the dogs, who, by now, were choked into a condition bordering upon helplessness.

Without running the slightest risk of being bitten, he removed the nooses of the two riatas, coiled them up, flung one to the young sport and affixed the other to his own saddle bow.

Shortly afterward the party was mounted and returning to the main trail.

"It was a very fortunate thing, professor," remarked old Diamond Dick, "that I and my pards took a short cut to the Ouray trail and passed by Chuck Evan's ranch. If we hadn't, you'd have had to stay there for two days, and your position would have been anything but comfortable."

"Chuck'll think he's got an attack o' blind staggers when he gits home an' finds the perfesser got out o' the leg irons an' give the dorgs the slip," chuckled Handsome Harry.

"I left a line in the house for Chuck," replied Diamond Dick. "I merely stated that I had happened along and found out that the professor was all right and had released him."

"Thet'll bring Chuck inter Ouray on the lope."

"Possibly."

Diamond Dick turned to Finnegan.

"Now about your search, professor."

"I am looking, sir," said Finnegan, "for a great stone image, an idol of the ancient peoples who inhabited these mountains and mesas in prehistoric times. It is an image of the god Tlaloc and the learned gentlemen who have clubbed together to send me on my quest have accurate information which locates the statue somewhere in the vicinity of Custer's Canyon."

The Dicks looked at each other, and the old Serpent looked at the Dicks, tapping his forehead significantly.

There was a legend, current through that section of Arizona, that there was such an image, and that it was built over one of the richest veins of gold to be found anywhere in the country.

For years prospectors and the adventurously inclined had been hunting for the idol of Tlaloc.

Every foot of the country, it would seem, had been thoroughly explored, and as the idol had not been found, old Diamond Dick and his friends had come to look upon the legend as an idle tale.

"The learned gentlemen who clubbed together and sent you out here are thinking of the gold under the idol, I suppose?" Diamond Dick inquired, a twinkle in his eye.

"Not at all, not at all," returned the professor, hastily. "My quest is purely in the interests of science. I am to secure a sketch of the idol, make a perfect copy of its carvings, or, if the image is not too large, have it taken down, removed to the nearest railroad point and shipped to Medicine Hat."

Instead of clubbing together, Harry thought, the professor and his learned friends ought to have clubbed each other.

"Would you take a little advice from me, professor?" Diamond Dick asked.

"Certainly, Mr. Wade."

"Then take my word for it, the game isn't worth the candle."

"Not worth the candle? Why not?"

"There may be such an idol, although I doubt it; but whether there is or not, Custer's Canyon is not a very safe place for a man to go to look for it."

A gleam shot into the little man's pale blue eyes.

"Why isn't it safe?"

"It's a rough country. Indians prowl through it, outlaws make it their rendezvous, and if all you want is a picture of the idol, I repeat again the game isn't worth the candle."

"Sir," cried Finnegan, excitedly, "the man who told us about the idol was entirely trustworthy. He had seen it with his own eyes and he said, sir, that it was a smoking idol—fire and flame coming from its stone lips. Think of that!"

"What causes the fire and flame?"

The professor leaned from his saddle toward old Diamond Dick.

"The sacred fire of Montezuma burns within!"

"Who takes care of the sacred fire?"

Finnegan shook his head.

"I pass the ante."

The Dicks and Harry were surprised at this expression from the professor's lips. It was hardly in keeping with his character of wise guy and all-around savant.

"He's off the jump," Harry whispered to Bertie.

"Are you with me, Diamond Dick?" queried Finnegan. "All I want is the idol; you and your pards may have the gold."

"The gold to be found," replied Diamond Dick, "would hardly be an inducement. I take no stock in the story whatever. If I and my pards assist you, it will be entirely from a desire to oblige Oliver."

"You will help me?"

"I must think of it."

"When will you give me your answer?"

"After we reach Ouray."

"But that will cause more delay——"

"No. Custer's Canyon lies north of Ouray, and we are now to the south of the town."

This had to suffice the professor.

As they rode along the dusty trail, talking of other things, old Diamond Dick kept his eyes on Finnegan in a covert way.

Was he deceived in the man?

At that moment the veteran would have bet heavily that Professor Finnegan was other than he seemed.

He was not Red Ferg, however.

Dick and his pards had once seen the outlaw, so they were positive on this point.

Ouray was reached long after nightfall.

The horses were left at the corral, and the veteran and his party repaired at once to the hotel, took some refreshment and went to bed.

Somewhat late the next morning, Diamond Dick was awakened by a clatter of hoofs, loud cries and various other sounds indicative of a disturbance of some kind, all coming from the street.

Springing out of bed, he threw up his chamber window and looked down.

A runaway horse, riderless and with foam-flecked mouth and dripping sides, was dashing along the road.

Half-a-dozen men were trying to stop the brute, and Fritz Dunder and Two-Spot Peters, Diamond Dick's young aides, were just emerging from the lower part of the hotel as the old veteran took in the scene.

"Holy smoke!" cried Two-Spot, halting at the edge of the sidewalk and grabbing the Dutch boy by the coat tails. "Come back, Wienerwurst!"

"Leaf me alone yet!" shouted Fritz, jerking away from his friend. "I vill shtop der horse, you bed my life!"

"You'll get the crimp, that's what'll happen to you."

"Leave that horse alone, Fritz!" called Diamond Dick.

The Tenton, however, did not hear.

The horse dodged one of the men who were trying to head it off, broke away from another who caught the flying bridle and came full tilt at Fritz.

"I've got him!" yelled Fritz, jumping at the bits.

But Fritz didn't have him.

With a side leap, the broncho threw the German youth heels over head, bunting him into a pole which supported an electric arc light and making him see more stars in the daytime than he had ever counted at night.

Although the horse got away from the Hot Tamale, its speed was checked so that one of the men was able to grab the bits and bring it to a halt.

Two-Spot, hurrying over to the Tenton, helped him to his seat.

"Is he hurt?" cried Diamond Dick.

"Never touched him!" grinned the New York kid. "Fritz has joined the Don't-Worry Club, Dick, and you couldn't dent him with a sledge-hammer."

Fritz gave himself a shake, passed one hand across his face, and looked up at the old veteran.

"Id don'd count, Tiamont Tick," said he, with a faint smile. "Many a man vorries himseluf to death ofer such liddle dings vich ain't vort' der bodder at all. Dot's rightd."

When Fritz went back into the hotel he went with a stagger, but the patient grin never left his face.

"I say, Mr. Wade!"

Diamond Dick withdrew his gaze from the Dutch boy and fixed it upon a man who had halted on the sidewalk below.

This man wore a torn flannel shirt, was carrying a quirt in one hand, and had a little drizzle of blood flowing across his cheek.

Dick recognized the man as Job Hendricks, foreman in charge of a gang of tie-cutters at work in the woods beyond Rapid River.

Hendricks was in the veteran's employ and was getting out the ties for the railroad which the Dicks and their pards owned and operated.

"Was that your horse, Hendricks?" Dick asked.

"Shore. The consarned critter got skeered at a blanket Injun an' tossed me galley-west right on the

aide o' town. But thet don't matter. I got ter see ye, an' *muy pronto*."

"Anything wrong at the camp?"

"I should say."

"Come upstairs and tell me about it."

By the time Job Hendricks had limped up to Diamond Dick's room the old veteran was more than half dressed and ready to receive him.

"Hurt?" asked Dick, as the foreman dropped down on a chair.

"Sprained my knee, thet's all. I was ridin' in ter tell ye thet timber thieves hev been ter work, out at the camp."

"Timber thieves?"

"Thet's what. They made off with the pile o' ties down at the saw-mill. Rafted 'em down the river, I reckon, sometime durin' the night."

"Wasn't there a watchman at the saw-mill?"

"Gabe Benson was thar, but he was given a lick on the head with a club. He died jest arter I got ter the mill, about daylight. An' he wasn't able ter talk or tell us anythin'."

The old veteran's brow grew stern.

"What sort of men are these timber thieves that they commit murder in order to make off with a hundred dollars' worth of ties?"

"I don't reckon the villains opined they'd kill Gabe. It was a wicked blow they give him, howsumever."

"Diamond Dick, Jr., Harry and I will make for the scene just as soon as we can eat breakfast and saddle up."

The veteran and the foreman went down to the hotel office together.

Bertie, Handsome Harry and the boys were there, and when old Diamond Dick told them what had happened, the Serpent of Siskiyou jumped up and began slapping his biceps.

"Hyer's a patch of excitement thet needs cultivatin'," said he. "I dreamed o' trouble, last night, but kinder connected it with the perlessor an' thet idol he's a-rauntin'. But hyer it is, 'way off on another trail. When do we start, pard?"

"As soon as we can eat and get our horses."

"Fritz and I have warehoused our chuck already," said Two-Spot, his eyes brightening at the prospect of excitement. "We'll get the bronks and have 'em ready by the time they're wanted."

"Dot's vat's der madder," said Fritz.

Diamond Dick nodded and away went the boys at a double-quick.

Twenty minutes later Dick and his party, which included Fritz and the New York kid and Job Hendricks, were ready to use their spurs and quirts and make for the lumber camp.

Before they could leave, however, the professor came hurrying from up the street.

"What's this?" he demanded. "Are you going off to hunt for that idol without ever taking me along?"

"Idol be durned!" grunted Handsome Harry.

"We haven't any time to look for idols now," said Diamond Dick. "We have an important matter on hand which must be attended to without an hour's delay."

The look of heavy disappointment which overspread Finnegan's face caused the veteran to add:

"As soon as we get through with this job, Finnegan, we'll turn to and help with yours."

"It may be too late then," returned Finnegan.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but it's the best I can do."

The veteran was about to give the signal to start when he caught sight of Buck Keever, sheriff of Ouray County, standing on the sidewalk across the street.

Riding across, Dick beckoned the sheriff to come close.

"See that small man in the black clothes, Buck?" he asked, jerking his head toward the hotel.

"I've been watching him for an hour," replied Keever. "Those eyebrows of his are a funny combination. I got a letter from the Secret Service Department, not long ago, stating that moonshine whisky is being made in these parts, somewhere, and that a tough known as Red Ferg is believed to be the fellow who manufactures it. Red Ferg is

described as having one red eyebrow and one gray one. So——"

"That little man isn't Red Ferg, but he'll bear watching. Keep track of him. Don't try to bother him any, but don't let him lose your eyes."

"I understand."

The old veteran straightened in his saddle and motioned to his friends.

Then, simultaneously, every horse was put in motion, the veteran swerved into the lead, and the party was lost to sight along the trail in a cloud of dust.

A quarter of an hour later the professor hiked away in the same direction, a grim smile on his face and a light of determination in his pale blue eyes.

As he rode, he drew from the hip pockets concealed under the skirts of his long coat a pair of "bulldog" revolvers and examined the chambers to see that the weapons were in condition.

Having reassured himself, he returned the shooters to his pockets again.

Well in the rear of the professor, yet close enough to keep him in sight, rode Buck Keever.

"There's deviltry afoot," muttered the sheriff, as he saw the professor examine his guns. "Shouldn't wonder if there were a few surprises in store for the lot of us."

And Keever was right in this surmise.

CHAPTER III.

BY A HAIR'S BREADTH.

"Here iss someding vich I can't oxblain," remarked Fritz Dunder, after Dick and his friends had been an hour in the saddle.

"Cough it up, Dutch," said Harry.

"Doo-Shpot gif it to me alretty, und I can't guess it oudt. My mudder-in-law's sister got married to her sister-in-law's fadder, und der children married der uncle from der cousin in der case vich makes me vat relation to meinseluf——"

"Oh, you go hang!" growled Harry.

"You see," explained Two-Spot, with a side wink

at Bertie, "Little Bright-Eyes has joined the Don't-Worry push, so a gag like that won't fret him."

"Meppy nod," spoke up Fritz, something of a wild look in his eyes, "aber der more vat I dink oof dot gonuntrum der more vat I can't guess it oudt."

"Then forget it."

"Chimineddy! I can't forget id. Id shticks py me all der time. Oof my mudder-in-law's sister——"

"Chew it over to yourself, Dutch," grunted the old Serpent.

"We've got no time for puzzles of that kind," put in Diamond Dick, Jr. "I've known people to go off their trolley trying to work out combinations like that."

Fritz thereupon subsided; but he was thoughtful, and it was plain to all that he was trying to guess the answer.

There were two ferries across Rapid River, one known as the "Full-Hand," and another, two miles below, operated by a man named Bud Priestly.

It was to Bud Priestly's ferry that Dick and his party made their way.

The road leading down to the ferry was fringed with timber and a rank undergrowth of brush.

The scow used for transporting passengers across the stream was made fast to a tree with lock and chain and the ferryman was not in evidence.

On a shingle, thrust in a crack in the shore end of the scow, was written: "Back at 9."

"Hyer's a how-de-do," fumed Handsome Harry.

"We've a half hour to wait," said Diamond Dick, looking at his watch.

"That notice may mean 9 p. m. instead of 9 this morning," commented young Diamond Dick.

"I think it means 9 this morning, all right," returned the veteran. "We'll make ourselves as comfortable as possible and wait till then, anyhow. If Priestly doesn't materialize, we'll break the scow loose. Our business is most important and the end would justify the means."

Diamond Dick dropped his reins over the pommel and slipped from his saddle into the road.

A fallen tree lay near the roadside, and he seated

himself upon it, developed his cigar case, passed it around, and then lighted a weed and began to smoke in a thoughtful and abstracted way which he some times had.

The others dismounted and did what they could to pass the time.

Twenty or twenty-five minutes must have elapsed when suddenly, without the slightest warning whatever, a sharp report echoed through the timber.

The old veteran felt a stir of air in front of his face and the half-smoked cigar was plucked from his lips in a flash.

Almost simultaneously with the report a yell of pain came from the opposite side of the road, followed by a crashing among the bushes.

"Gle-ory to snakes an' forty-five pops!" whooped Handsome Harry, running toward Diamond Dick from the direction of the river. "Who fired thet shot, Dick? Who let off thet yell?"

Before the veteran could answer another cry came from the side of the road from which the shot had been fired.

"It was the professor, Dick! Head him off if he tries to come that way."

The voice was Buck Kever's, and, for a second or two old Diamond Dick was nonplused and hardly knew what to think.

He knew that a bullet had passed his head, missing him by a hair's breadth, that a cry as of pain had come from the right-hand side of the road, and that the shot and Kever's call had come from the left.

Instead of paying attention to the sheriff's shouted words, Diamond Dick, after a moment or two of quick thought, leaped into the bushes on the right.

Some distance ahead he could hear a crackling in the undergrowth, and from about the point where the shout of pain must have come he found a trampled place and a spatter of red on the green leaves.

Of one thing the old veteran was now certain:

The bullet which had so narrowly missed his head had struck a man hidden in the brush on the opposite side of the road.

Had the wounding of the ambushed man occurred by accident or by design?

That was the important point.

Diamond Dick had no time to spend debating the question.

The sounds of crackling brush were growing more and more distant and bearing toward the trail.

"Ride north along the trail and take the horses!" Diamond Dick cried to his friends behind him.

"Keno, pard!" Handsome Harry whooped back.

What the old veteran feared would happen finally came to pass, and the wounded man he was following reached the trail; the crackling of the bushes ceased and a sound of galloping, rapidly fading in the distance, came floating back.

But there was a tramp of other hoofs, too, and when Dick sprang out into the road, Diamond Dick, Jr., Harry, Hendricks, Fritz and Two-Spot were near.

The young sport was leading Diamond Dick's horse and Dick sprang into the saddle and pursuit was commenced.

"Who was the varmint?" queried Handsome Harry.

"I didn't see him, old pard," Diamond Dick answered.

"Why didn't ye turn and let loose on that whelp of a perfessor?"

"Because it is very doubtful whether the professor intended to do me a bad turn or a good one."

"What's the answer?" muttered the Californian, furiously angry at the turn events had taken and at their inability to meet up with the miscreant who had intended injury to Diamond Dick.

"I don't know the answer yet," replied the veteran, "perhaps we'll get an answer when we capture the man ahead—if we ever do."

But they did not effect a capture.

After a wild chase of some fifteen minute's duration the hoof beats ahead, which had been becoming louder and louder in the pursuer's ears, died away abruptly as though by magic, and they heard nothing.

They thought the horseman had left the trail—turned aside to wait until they had passed so that he might take the back track—but an exhaustive search along the trailside exploded this theory.

The fellow was not to be found, and Diamond Dick called the search off and headed the return of his friends toward the ferry.

When half way back they were met by Buck

Keever, very much wrought up because no one had seemed to pay any attention to him.

"Why didn't you turn back when I yelled?" he demanded, pulling up his horse.

"I thought the other trail a better one, Buck," Diamond Dick answered, as he and his friends reined their horses to a halt.

"If you had done as I said, Diamond Dick, you might have captured the man who tried to kill you."

"And I might have captured the man who, perhaps, saved my life."

There was general astonishment at this.

"How do you make that out?" queried Keever.

"The bullet that whizzed past my head wounded a man in the bushes, on the opposite side of the road."

"Wounded a man in the bushes? Who?"

"Give it up."

"What was the man doing in the bushes?"

"Give that up, too. But we may take it for granted, I think, that the fellow wasn't there for any good purpose. The fact that he fled from us ought to be proof of that. And the professor couldn't have wounded that fellow by a chance shot."

"He might."

"How far was he from me?"

"Not over ten feet."

"Do you think he could miss me, even by a hair's breadth, at ten feet?"

"Likely he was a poor shot."

"He must have been a rank shot if he aimed to hit me at ten feet and missed. Did he follow us out of Ouray?"

"He left very soon after you did."

Diamond Dick started his horse along the road once more and Keever turned his animal and followed.

"He followed us and you followed him, eh?" Diamond Dick went on.

"You might call it that."

"When did he turn into the brush?"

"About a hundred feet from where the road forks, one fork going to the ferry. He left his horse hitched to a tree and went into the brush on foot."

"And you hitched your horse and made after him?"

"Sure. You told me not to let him get out of my sight."

"You did well, Keever, as you always do. You

saw him creep up to within ten feet of me, then pull his gun and blaze away?"

"He didn't pull his gun at once. He hoisted himself up and looked for several minutes toward the road; then he jerked out his gun and rested the muzzle over his left arm which he crooked in front of his face."

Diamond Dick's face brightened.

"I see. It's my opinion, Kever, that the professor, instead of being an enemy of mine, has proved the truest kind of a friend and saved my life."

Several of the old veteran's party were beginning to share his opinion.

"Well," muttered Kever, "the professor got away, no matter what he tried to do."

"Did he take his horse?"

"No. When I went to get my mount I saw his horse at the place where it had been hitched."

"The quickest way to capture the professor would have been to stay close to his horse."

"I know that well enough, but I wanted to see what was going on over in this direction."

They were now at the fork in the trail.

"Go on, Buck," Diamond Dick said, "and see if you can find the professor's horse now. If you can, bring the animal down to the ferry."

"All right."

The sheriff thereupon continued on along the trail while Dick and the rest turned to the right and made their way to the river.

"Gee!" cried Two-Spot. "The old catamaran has got past our guard someway."

Looking toward the place where the scow had been chained to the tree, Diamond Dick saw that the boat was indeed gone.

And it had certainly not been released by its owner, for the staple which secured the boat end of the chain had been chopped out of the wood.

The veteran swept his eyes over the river in an attempt to locate the scow, but could not do so.

The boat was nowhere within sight.

Just then Kever came up with Finnegan's horse.

"He hadn't come after the animal," remarked the sheriff.

"I'm wondering if he did not come after the ferryboat," returned Diamond Dick. "Somebody has chopped the craft loose, made off with it, and here we are, hung up."

At that juncture, while they all stood looking and wondering what object the professor could have had

in taking the scow, if he really did take it, a faint cry for help came from down the river.

Looking over the tree tops, in the direction from which the call came, Dick and his friends saw a cloud of smoke.

A quick use of their spurs carried them to the river.

Their range of view was limited, however, on account of a bend in the stream, a short distance below the ferry landing.

Without a word, the party, by a common impulse, started along the bank at a splashing gallop.

Presently they rounded the bend and a thrilling spectacle burst upon their gaze.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURNING SCOW.

What Diamond Dick and his friends saw was the scow, floating down the river and burning fiercely.

The flames were all confined to the forward part, but were steadily eating their way back toward the stern.

The fact that the ferryboat had been chopped loose, fired and cast adrift was not a matter of very serious import; but it was the fact that the professor was helplessly bound to the stern of the blazing craft, and about to meet a doom too terrible to think of, which sent the hot blood racing through the veins of the onlooking horsemen.

"Come on, Harry!" cried Diamond Dick, Jr., goading his mount with the spurs and tearing along down the bank.

"I'm with ye, son," the old Serpent of Siskiyou answered, and followed the young sport closely.

Diamond Dick and the others remained where they were and watched the rescue as it was effected by Diamond Dick, Jr., and the Californian.

The two latter galloped much faster than the current carried the boat and were soon at a point considerably below the scow.

There they turned into the water, swam their horses out to the doomed ferryboat and right up under the stern where the heat was fairly scorching.

"We'll have to be quick," warned the young sport.

"*Pronto* it is, pardy," answered the old Serpent.

The professor was bound within easy reach, and both Bertie and Harry used their knives on the ropes, thus losing no time in setting him free.

"I'll handle him, son," said Harry, as the professor was rolled into the water.

Grasping the unfortunate Finnegan by the coat collar, the Californian supported his head above the surface while swimming his horse for shore.

Dick and the others had ridden down, and when Handsome Harry had made a landing, he dropped the professor in a heap on the rocky bank.

"I'm a geezer if that wasn't a little the closest yet!"

This from the professor as he raised himself up and sat on the rocks in his dripping garments.

"Are you hurt?"

"Never singed a feather."

"But you're soaked to the skin."

"Rather; but, gentlemen, the water felt mighty good after the baking I had."

"What happened, Finnegan? Why did you leave Ouray before we got back there?"

"I thought I would go off and look for the idol on my own hook."

"Are you really looking for an idol?"

Diamond Dick fastened a sharp glance on Finnegan's pale blue eyes.

"I am," replied the professor, meeting the glance unflinchingly.

"Well," old Diamond Dick went on, "I'm waiting for you to tell me why you picked that cigar out from between my teeth."

"It was necessary for my bullet to fan your face in order to save your life. I saw a man on the other side of the trail drawing a bead on you, and the only way I could get him was by shooting past you. I put a bullet through the fellow's wrist."

The professor spoke with the utmost unconcern, as though he was in the habit of doing such things.

"Why was the fellow aiming a bullet at me?" Diamond Dick asked.

Finnegan shrugged his shoulders.

"Probably he was one of the timber thieves you are after. The woods seem to be full of them."

There was a short silence, during which the professor, after a great effort, managed to get his old top hat from his head and to knock out the dents with a great deal of solicitude.

"I guess I look like thirty cents," said he.

"I am much obliged to you for saving my life, Finnegan," Diamond Dick observed, with a humorous twinkle in his eye.

"You can pay me for it if you want to."

"How?"

"By helping me find Tlacol."

"After I find the timber thieves and secure the man who killed my employee at the saw-mill I will help you. But you haven't finished yet. Who tied you to the scow, fired it and set it adrift?"

"They must have belonged to the same gang as the man who made an attempt to shoot you. But I can't swear to it. I was dodging through the brush to keep out of the way of some fellow behind me who seemed bent on running me down, when, biff! I got a wallop on the nut that retired my thinking apparatus. When I came to I was sliding down stream on that boat with the fire coming toward me."

"The friends of the man you shot probably took that way to even matters up with you."

"Probably."

"We have your horse here, professor. If you take my advice, you will ride back to Ouray, dry your clothes and make yourself comfortable, and wait until we finish our work and return. Then we will take up with you the matter of this idol."

"We aren't far from Custer's Canyon now, are we?" Finnegan asked, as he got up and climbed into his saddle.

"No."

"Then I guess I'll ride with you gentlemen if you have no objections. You may need another man, and, although slightly disfigured, I beg to assure you that I'm still in the ring."

"Very well," said Diamond Dick. "We'll ride back to the ferry and see if Priestly is there yet, and what arrangements we can make to get across dry-shod. If we can't get across any other way we shall have to swim our horses."

But Priestly was found, when they got back to the ferry. He was swearing mad, and was just poling another scow up to the landing.

The Dicks assured the boatman that the destruction of the other scow was the work of the timber thieves, and that they—the Dicks—were out after the villains.

This bit of information made Priestly zealous to serve the old veteran and his companions, and he lost no time in hauling them across to the opposite bank.

A half-mile of rough trail then lay between the Dicks and the saw-mill.

As they rode along the up and down path the professor had a place very close to old Diamond Dick.

"Tell me something about this expedition of yours," said Finnegan, in a low voice.

Dick told of the theft of the ties and of the murder of the watchman.

"The man who was aiming the revolver at you," went on Finnegan, "was trying to put you out of this case, evidently thinking the pursuit would not amount to much if he could pick off the leader of it. And the cutting loose of the scow, firing it and setting it adrift was done to hamper your passage of the river. Tying me to the boat was a secondary consideration. A bullet would have settled my case equally as well."

"That's pretty fair, professor," said Diamond Dick. "I had already figured the matter out in that way. What inference do you draw from that line of reasoning?"

"I draw two inferences. First, that the gang of timber thieves is pretty desperate. Second, that they wouldn't have tried to commit murder to get you and your pards off the trail if there was only a theft of a couple of hundred ties for them to answer for."

"There is also the killing of the mill watchman."

"Yes; but there is something else back of this besides a mere theft of timber."

"What?"

The professor shook his head and kept his own counsel.

On arriving at the saw-mill the Dicks found ten men, comprising the entire force of cutters and mill operators who worked under Hendricks.

The men were all armed and in a particularly savage mood on account of the killing of Gabe Benson.

The sight of the Dicks caused every one of the ten to give vent to exclamations of satisfaction.

"What have you men been doing since Hendricks left?" Diamond Dick inquired.

"We've been lookin' fer ties an' fer signs of the thieves," replied Cottrell, a six-foot Kentuckian. "We've done a right smart lot o' lookin', too, but couldn't pan out any color. Whar them ties went is a mystery."

"How far down the river have you been?"

"A couple o' miles below the canyon, I reckon, and into the cut-off plum to the wall."

The "cut-off" referred to by Cottrell was a branch of the Rapid River—not a feeder, but an outlet.

This outlet broke away from the main channel toward the lower end of Custer's Canyon, swept with

race-horse speed for a hundred rods and then vanished right under a towering mountain of rock.

Where the immense volume of water went no one knew.

There are many rivers in Arizona which have the vanishing habit, but none save the Rapid "cut-off" drops out of sight at the base of a mountain.

"You saw no suspicious characters in the hills?" Dick went on.

"Nary a one," replied Cottrell.

Then another of the lumbermen spoke up.

"We found a cabin, though, Dimun Dick. It looked as though it had been occupied purty recent."

"Where is this cabin?"

"On the north slope o' Pinochle Hill."

"I know where that is," said Diamond Dick. "It would be impossible to reach that place on our horses, so Diamond Dick, Jr., and I will go up there on foot and reconnoiter. You and Kever, Harry, might go down to the cut-off and give another look for the ties. Hendricks, you stay here and watch the horses."

"I don't think it's safe for you and the young sport to tackle any such proposition," said Buck Kever.

The old veteran turned on the sheriff with a quiet smile.

"I mean it," continued Kever. "That attempt to assassinate you on the other side of the river, Diamond Dick, proves that this gang has got it in for you and won't hesitate to fill you full of lead."

"If they get the chance," qualified Diamond Dick. "This is a reconnoitering expedition, Kever. Come on, Bertie."

Not only was Kever considerably worked up, but Handsome Harry was also champing the bit, eager to go with his two pards instead of being shunted over into the cut-off.

Two hours of the hardest kind of tramping brought the Dicks to the slope of Pinochle Hill—a wooded declivity whose base dipped into the waters of Rapid River at the head of Custer's Canyon.

In a sort of cove, at the foot of the hill, a log boom had been constructed by Diamond Dick's woodcutters.

The boom was about half-filled with logs ready to be hauled up to the mill and sawed into ties.

The cabin spoken of by the lumberman was found with but little difficulty, half way up the hillside and well screened by the timber.

It was a small affair and bore every evidence of being occupied.

Embers were yet glowing on the hearth of a stick-and-plaster fireplace, and the remains of a meal lay spread over the top of an old box in the center of the room.

The cabin had no windows and only one door.

The old veteran stepped inside and looked around; the young sport followed him.

Barely were both across the threshold when the door was slammed shut from the outside and a hoarse laugh struck on their ears.

"Trapped!" cried a voice; "we've got the Dimun Dicks too dead ter skin!"

CHAPTER V.

GETTING OUT OF THE TRAP.

The unexpected had happened, and the Dicks were surprised, of course, but they were not yet disposed to yield themselves into the hands of their foes.

A glint of steel came into the old veteran's eyes; he drew his lithe frame together, raised himself to his full height and whirled toward the door, both hands on his revolvers.

The young sport was also facing the entrance.

"You an' the young sport kin come out peaceable, Dimun Dick," the voice outside went on, "or ye kin be foolish enough ter make a stand an' git riddled fer yer pains. Which is it ter be?"

"We'll remain where we are until our friends come up from below," Diamond Dick answered, calmly.

"No, ye won't. Afore yer friends kin come up from below you two will be done fur. Surrender now or take the consequences."

"Who are you?"

"It wouldn't help matters any ef ye knew. Will ye come out, or hev we got ter take ye?"

"You'll have to take us; and you'll find there'll be nothing easy in that proposition."

"It'll be easier than ye think. We'll fire the shanty. When you come out we'll riddle ye. An' ye'll hev ter come out by the chimney kase this door's braced with a log."

Had the cabin been constructed to serve as a man-trap it could not have been built to better advantage.

There were no windows, no chinks between the logs.

There had been chinks, of course, but they were filled up with plaster as hard as adamant.

Bertie, with a case knife taken from the top of the box and with the butt of his revolver, endeavored to break a hole so that he could command one side of the hut with his forty-fours.

But this he found impossible.

"Don't waste your time, Bertie," said the old veteran.

The young sport flung the case knife to the floor.

"After the fire is started," said he, "the smoke might hide our attempt to get out by way of the chimney."

"No, that won't do. They're expecting us to escape by the chimney and the entire force of men will undoubtedly be on that side of the house. We must try to get out by the door."

"It's fastened on the outside."

Diamond Dick pointed to a section of a log which lay by the fireplace.

"We will use that as a battering ram," said he. "If our attack on the door proves successful we can protect ourselves from the bullets of our foes by using the door as a shield and carrying it with us until we're well in the timber."

The young sport was not slow in seeing the wisdom of the old veteran's suggestion.

As they were stooping to pick up the section of log, another hail came from without, this time from the back of the house.

"We've set the fire an' ye'll die like rats in a trap onless ye agree ter give up peaceable. Ye've got one chance. Will ye take it?"

"No."

"Then yer fate will be on yer own heads. The minit ye show yerselves above the top of the chimney we'll pepper ye."

"The door's our only chance, Bertie," said old Diamond Dick, in a low tone. "Up with the log and we'll try it."

The piece of log was extremely heavy and tried the strength of the two, but they lifted it and rushed toward the door, striking it in the exact center with their battering ram.

That first blow all but did the work.

"Once more," said Diamond Dick.

Crossing to the rear of the room, they made another rush.

The door, broken from its hinges, fell outward on top of the log which had been used to prop it shut and which had been forced aside.

A wild yell came from around the cabin.

"They've busted the door!"

"Train yer guns on 'em as they rush out!"

"Git 'em! Git 'em ef ye die fer it!"

The Dicks lost not a moment.

Raising the door, they carried it with them, interposing it between themselves and their enemies.

Spat, spat, spat!

Bullet after bullet struck the oak planks of which the door was built. Some of the leaden missiles sang through the air and some chugged into the ground near the feet of the Dicks. But, in spite of the hot fire, they were not harmed by that first volley.

All the while the shooting was going on they were doing their utmost to get farther and farther into the timber.

"Head 'em off!" yelled the voice which had spoken to them while they were in the cabin; "get between them an' the mill! Drive 'em inter the river!"

This movement was soon in full blast, as the Dicks could tell from the sounds made by their foes.

"Drop the door!" said the old veteran, his sharp eyes flashing from point to point. "We've got to make a run of it and reach a place where we can make a stand."

Owing to the rough nature of the ground, the outlaws were able to execute their maneuver and form a half circle about the Dicks just as they drew close to the foot of the hill.

"It's up to us to fight our way past the men who're between us and the mill," said young Diamond Dick, bringing out his guns.

For a moment the old veteran was of the young sport's opinion; but he caught sight of something which changed his plans in a flash.

The veteran had gone to the cabin rendezvous in the hope of developing the enemy, for a seen foe is always easier to combat than a foe in hiding; but Diamond Dick had not thought to find himself in such desperate straits.

The objects that changed Diamond Dick's plan of campaign consisted of a pair of spike-soled boots pendent from the limb of a tree at the edge of the log boom.

"Wait," said he to the young sport and dropped down on the ground and hastily removed his footgear.

After that he was but a few moments in donning the spike-soled affairs and leaping upon the logs of the boom.

A pike pole was thrust into one of the logs near shore, and the veteran wrenched it loose.

He worked with great rapidity; in fact, a master logger could not have selected two logs and worked them out of the boom and into the current of the river with any more expedition than did the game old veteran.

By a sort of instinct, Bertie had divined Diamond Dick's plan while he was getting into the spike-soled boots; and, although his own footgear had smooth soles, he did not hesitate to leap onto the bobbing and rolling logs and run across to where Diamond Dick was holding the two trunks which he had selected for the race down the canyon.

"It will be a close call and you'll have to hang to me," said the veteran. "We have aroused these timber thieves into action, and before we are done with the game we'll have the scoundrel that killed Benson. Now, then; off we go!"

And away they went, darting from under the murderous fire of the baffled ruffians who had reached the water's edge.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "CUT-OFF."

Rapid River was not misnamed, for its current was swift at all points, but trebly so in the canyon.

Through this rocky defile the waters were drawn with terrific force, whirling in eddies that were churned to foam over the pointed rocks of the river's bed.

The speed of a lightning express was as nothing compared with the gait of those two unique steeds which the Dicks rode standing, after the Roman fashion.

With the spikes of the boot soles well sunk in the logs and with the point of the pike-staff buried deep, the old veteran steadied himself and succeeded in holding the logs together.

Like arrows from a bow, they shot along over the top of the heaving water, and from others of the outlaw gang, up on the canyon side, among the bushes, shot after shot was rained down upon them.

But as well might the marksmen have attempted to shoot at lightning flashes; no matter what their skill, it was insufficient.

A fierce eddy sent the logs spinning around and carried young Diamond Dick off his feet and into the water.

This momentary pause in one place gave the outlaws an advantage in their target practice and they made the most of it.

Diamond Dick caught the young sport's hand and they were whirled along through a hail of bullets.

And fortune was with them, for the time being.

Neither of them was hit, and Bertie was soon lifted to the log beside which he had fallen.

By now the outlaws had been left behind.

Although there was nothing to be feared from their bullets, yet a new and unforeseen danger threatened.

This was the cut-off!

The eddies had carried the logs to the left side of the river, well into that part of the current which divided from the parent stream.

The veteran did his utmost to keep the logs from taking the lateral course, but he was at the mercy of the current and there was little he could do.

That little availed nothing, and the Dicks glided through the entrance into the narrower defile, straight toward the high wall of the mountain, where the cut-off vanished from the eye of man.

"This race, Bertie," said Dick, "has brought us stirrup to stirrup with death."

There was no bravado in the old veteran's tone; simply the calm acknowledgment of a fact which was plainly evident to both himself and the young sport.

"We're up against it good and hard," said Diamond Dick, Jr.

Hardly had he spoken when fate again showed itself to be ranged on the side of the usual "Wade luck."

Fifteen feet or less above the surface of the rushing water was an overhanging rock, and on this rock Handsome Harry and Buck Keever appeared as if by magic.

They had coiled riatas in their hands, having been using the ropes to help them over the precipitous rises which lay between the saw-mill and the cut-off.

Diamond Dick had sent Harry to the spot for another look for the stolen ties, and it would seem as though the finger of Providence had been in it.

The overhanging boulder was a rock in every sense of the term; there was not a particle of earth upon it and not a sign of shrub or tree.

In frantic haste, Harry and Keever could be seen to drop on their knees and affix the ends of the ropes to projections on the upper face of the boulder.

"Stand by to grab aholt!" yelled Harry, as he and the sheriff arose to their feet, ready to fling the noosed ends of the ropes.

"I'll throw to you, Diamond Dick," shouted Keever, "and Harry will throw to the young sport."

"We're ready!" called Diamond Dick.

The logs would not pass directly under the rock, but somewhat to the left, although well within range of the ropes providing no miscalculations were made in the throwing.

As so much depended upon the accuracy with which the ropes should be cast, it was well that Keever had thought to divide the work and thus, as far as possible, avoid mishaps.

With the eye of a hawk, Handsome Harry watched the darting logs.

"Now!" he cried, hoarsely, and the sinuous ropes leaped outward and downward.

They flew straight and were caught as planned, Diamond Dick securing the riata thrown by Keever, and the young sport catching the one thrown by Harry.

The Serpent of Siskiyou had small faith in the anchoring of the ropes, and after the throw, both he and Keever dropped flat on the top of the rock and clung to the riatas with all their strength.

As the logs glided onward the ropes tightened and were pulled around on the top of the rock.

Diamond Dick's rope held and he was dragged from the logs; but Bertie's rope yielded, slipped over the jagged place around which it had been tied and was jerked into the stream below, carrying the old Serpent with it.

Bertie dropped astride the log, clinging to the pike pole with the crook of his left arm, and pulled the rope toward him.

Harry was not injured by his souse in the water, and had not let go his desperate hold on the riata; so the young sport was able to draw him to the log, and there the old Serpent and his little pard clung and rode out the remainder of that desperate race.

Diamond Dick, climbing hand over hand to the surface of the overhanging boulder, paused in consternation.

He saw the log with his two pards glide into the foaming spray that churned about the base of the wall at the end of the cut-off and then, in the twinkling of an eye, both log and riders disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PIT.

The failure of the rope to hold and the accident to Harry had happened so quickly as almost to defy realization on the young sport's part.

When he saw his old pard struggling in the water, however, the youth took a sudden and complete hold of the chain of events.

To drop down on the log, cling to the pike-pole and drag Harry to his side, took Diamond Dick, Jr., but a few moments.

The old Serpent got his arm over the log, and the next instant they had smashed against the face of the cliff with a force that sent them both from the rounded sides of the tree trunk.

Bertie laid about him with his hands in an effort to swim, but found himself in the grip of an undertow against which it was utterly impossible for him to fight.

The log, swirling past, struck him on the head and his senses left him.

When he again opened his eyes he was in blank darkness.

His head was throbbing from the effects of his injury, and he felt as though he could not move a limb had his life depended upon it.

Where was he?

The swirl of waters was still in his ears, but he had a vague idea that it was only an echo of the sound that had almost deafened him when he was thrown from the log and began his losing battle with the undertow.

Something touched his face and glided over it, then picked up his arm and released it so that it fell limply back.

"Bertie, boy," whispered a voice, heavy with sorrow, "hev ye crossed the divide ahead o' yer old pard? Hev ye cashed in while yer old pard Harry has a hand er two yet ter play in this game o' life? I wisht it had been me, son, I wisht it had been me!"

Again the hand of the old Serpent was laid on Bertie's face, and Bertie, with a quick effort, roused himself and caught the hand with a fervent pressure.

"Don't sponge me off the list too soon, Harry," said Bertie.

"What?" There was a great throb of joy in the old Serpent's voice. "Ye're all right, son? No bones broke, nor nothin' like thet?"

"The worst that happened to me was a crack on

the head from that log of ours. I took a little trip to the land of Nod, but I'm wide awake once more and worth a dozen dead men, I hope."

"Wake up, snakes, an' warble!" murmured Handsome Harry. "This hyer's almost too good ter be true. When I pulled ye out o' the water an' kerried ye up hyer through the dark, I was shore of the opinion thet we'd pulled off our last go tergether; pardy! Jumpin' sandhills! Now thet ye're alive, son, I ain't got no kick comin' fer anythin'."

It warmed the young sport's heart to note this manifestation of feeling on the part of his great old pard, his "diamond in the rough."

"I hope that when I go," said Diamond Dick, Jr., "it will be something besides a log and a river that takes me. But where are we?"

"Pass the ante."

"It's a pit of some kind, seems like," Bertie went on, rising to a sitting posture and noticing how their words echoed through the vastness around them. "It must be a big pit, too."

"This hyer cut-off is an underground river, I reckon. Mebbby it's worn out a pocket in the heart o' the mounting."

"And we're in the pocket, eh?"

"More'n likely."

"If there's no way out of the pocket except by the road we got in, possibly it would have been better if that log had knocked out our brains."

"We never got inter a hole yet thet we couldn't git out of, Bertie."

"There's always got to be a first time, pard."

"This ain't the fust time, an' I'll bet on it."

"I hope not, for the first time, in this instance, would undoubtedly be the last. We have got to make a tour of discovery, Harry, and see what we can find out."

Bertie felt for his guns, but his belt had been stripped from his waist.

"Got your shooters, Harry? My belt is gone."

"I've got my belt, but the shooters aire missin'. I opine they drapped out when I took thet header from the rock. Thar's one thing I'm powerful glad of, son."

"What's that?"

"Why, as I figger it, I've traded places with Dick. He's safe with Kever, an' I'm——"

"Safe with me," laughed the young sport.

"How in Sam Hill did ye and Dick happen ter come shootin' along the cut-off on them logs?"

Bertie explained as briefly as possible.

"Jumpin' sandhills!" jubilated Harry. "Reckon them varmints knows the Dicks come hard, by now. It was a great ride ye had, son. My only cause fer sorer is that I couldn't take it with ye."

"Did you locate the stolen ties?"

"Wall, nary. They're plum gone an' the Ole Boy himself kain't tell how."

The young sport got slowly upon his feet.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed.

"What is it, pardy?"

"This head of mine. That rap was a stiff one."

"Is yer head bleedin' any?"

"Not that I can discover. We've got to begin looking around and see if we can find out what sort of a place we are in. Where's the river?"

"Off to the right."

"Let's follow it up," said Bertie, groping his way in the direction indicated. "I'd give a farm for a box of dry matches about now, or——"

He stumbled over something in his path and went down on his hands and knees.

A brief period of silence followed the mishap.

"Why ain't ye gittin' up, son?" asked Harry.

"I've found something," answered Bertie, still on his knees.

"What?"

"A railroad tie."

"Tearin' blazes! Aire ye shore?"

"There can't be any mistake! There's not only one, but a dozen, all within arm's reach."

"Thunder! They must hev got away from them thar thieves an' taken the cut-off, like you an' Dick."

Bertie made no answer to this, but the more he groped around in the dark the more ties he found.

He was able to count a hundred in a very few minutes.

"If a hundred ties got away from the thieves," said the young sport, finally, in a musing tone, "they must have been extremely careless in the way they handled them. And how do you suppose, Harry," he added, raising his voice, "they all got out on the bank in this pit?"

The Californian had not thought of that phase of the matter, and he gave a startled jump.

"Do ye opine, son," he queried, in a tense tone, "thet thar were some o' the thieves in hyer ter snake the ties out o' the water?"

"Could they have gotten out in any other way?"

"Blamed ef I see how they could."

"This may be a rendezvous for the gang; possibly, it's the main rendezvous, and that hut on the slope of Pinochle Hill is only a temporary headquarters."

"Do ye reckon that every time the gang wants ter git in hyer they hev ter go through what we did?"

"Of course not. There must be another entrance."

"What would they be doin' with ties? Think they're goin' ter build an underground railroad?"

"I haven't any idea what they intend doing with them, but here are the ties and some one must have pulled them out of the water. If that's so, why——"

Bertie broke off again, this time with an exclamation of astonishment.

"What now, pardy?" asked Harry.

"Here's a barrel."

"Empty?"

"Now; it seems to be full."

The old Serpent made his way to the young sport's side.

After some maneuvering, Harry rolled the barrel partly over and a gurgle of escaping liquid reached Bertie's ears.

"What's in it?"

It was several moments before an answer came.

"Red-eye!" exclaimed Harry; "this hyer bar'l is chuck full o' fresh-made forty-rod. I wonder if the bar'l come in with the ties? Catamounts an' hyeners, but this puts new life inter me!"

Once more came silence, broken only by the sound of the gurgling flow.

"Try a few swallows, son," said Harry, at last. "It'll straighten out the kinks in yer thinkin' apparatus an' put steel in yer muscle."

Bertie took a few swallows of the stuff.

It was raw, and a most disagreeable dose, but its effect was almost magical.

"Question," said Harry; "how did the bar'l git hyer?"

Before Bertie had a chance to formulate any theories on this head, a point of light appeared in the distance.

Gripping Handsome Harry's arm, the young sport held to it, and watched closely while the glow of light grew larger and larger—certain evidence that it was approaching.

Finally a mumble of voices was heard.

"Down!" said the young sport, pulling his old pard down behind a small heap of ties. "Let's listen

to those fellows. What they say may be of importance to us."

There were two men and they advanced slowly, the lantern swinging between them.

"No two men, outside o' the Dimun Dicks, could hev made thet escape from the cabin," one of the men was saying, when he came within earshot.

"But they jest nacherly got out o' the fryin' pan inter the fire," the other man, who was carrying a cross-cut saw over his shoulder, answered his companion. "I was up on Pinochle Hill an' I seen their logs shoot inter the cut-off. It's all day with the Dicks, an' the only man we got ter fear is Naylor."

"Red kin take keer o' Naylor all right."

"Then the quicker he does it the easier I'll feel. Naylor is about the slickest hand in the employ of the Secret Service, thet's right."

"He's after us, hey?"

"Like a house afire."

"Is thet the reason the ole man ain't startin' up the distillery?"

"Thet's it an' nothin' else."

"I thort he was waitin' fer the Greasers ter fetch in a supply o' corn?"

"Thunder! Why, he's got purty nigh a thousan' bushels stored away. Come on an' le's set down. Thar's no use hurryin' ter cut these ties in two fer firewood. 'Twon't do fer thet heathen idol ter spout smoke while Naylor is anywhar in Arizony."

The man with the light seated himself on a tie a yard in front of the place where Bertie and Harry were lying, listening with all their ears.

The outlaw's back was turned toward the two pards, and he placed the lantern on the tie at his side.

The other man dropped the cross-cut saw and seated himself at his comrade's side.

"I got a feelin' in my bones, Perse," remarked the second man, "thet some blame kerlamity is shore goin' ter happen."

"Bosh!"

"No bosh about it! Ferg hadn't ort ter hev tried ter steal Dimun Dick's wood, nohow. He might hev knowed he'd bring the ole war-hoss down on the lot of us. An' killin' thet thar watchman at the saw-mill was the wurst part o' the hull bizness."

"Aire ye losin' yer nerve, Clip?"

"Not exactly; but you know as well as I do, Perse, thet when the Dicks take a trail they kain't

be shook loose until they do what they set out ter do."

"They've already reached the end of the trail in this hyer bizness. We ain't got nothin' more ter fear from the Dicks, so ye kin cut thet part of it out."

"But Naylor is still left. He's sworn thet he'll git Ferg."

"Thet ain't no sign he'll git him."

"Say, you ain't fergot Hanchett, hev ye?"

"The traitor thet Red Ferg sentenced ter death an' thet got away by swimmin' the river?"

"Thet's him. He was an ornery varmint. I shouldn't wonder ef he went ter one o' them Secret Service chaps an' told how ter reach thet heathen joss up above."

"Ef it comes ter a show down, Clip, Red Ferg'll blow up the idol an' blow a reg'lar mounting inter the hole."

"With us down hyer?"

"Thar's a way fer us ter git out, by divin' an' swimmin'."

"At the cut-off?"

"Naw, the current runs the wrong way at the cut-off. It's at the other side the pit whar the river goes out. We kin git away thar an' be in Mexico in twenty-four hours."

"Thet'll knock us out o' this plant as a place o' bizness, eh?"

"Shore it will. We kin all git out, but no man kin ever git back, unless he wants ter run the risk o' dashin' out his brains by tryin' to git in by the cut-off."

"I reckon Ferg'll be a little slow how he sets off the blast up in the idol."

Diamond Dick, Jr., and Handsome Harry had heard much of great interest and profound importance.

Had they waited longer they might have heard more, but Bertie had been revolving a plan in his mind ever since the two men had seated themselves on the tie, and he feared it would be impossible to carry out the plan if he waited too long.

"We want their clothes, and their guns, and their lantern," Bertie whispered to his old pard. "There's a rope tied around the tie on which those two are sitting, and if we're quick we can get what we want and leave the rascals bound and gagged."

Harry's answer was a quick pressure of his big hand on Bertie's arm.

Softly they got up, stepped around the pile of ties

behind which they had lain concealed, and then, in a flash, had hurled themselves upon the unsuspecting outlaws.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CLIMB FOR LIFE.

The attack of the young sport and the old Serpent succeeded beyond the expectations of either of them.

The outlaws, Perse and Clip, taken entirely off their guard, were caught firmly about the throat, hurled backward and held down until strangled almost to a point of helplessness.

It was the sort of a set-to the young sport did not at all fancy, but he and Harry were not in a position to choose their own ground, or method of attack.

Coats were stripped from the backs of the outlaws, and the rope, used for snaking the ties out of the underground river, was cut in lengths and used to tie their hands behind them.

A quarter of an hour of quick work saw Perse and Clip bound and gagged, and Bertie and Harry clothed in their garments—which fitted none too well—and armed with their guns.

"Now what, pardy?" asked Handsome Harry, highly elated.

The Serpent of Siskiyou was not only pleased at the success he and his little pard had had in dealing with Perse and Clip, but also at the information gleaned from the conversation overheard between the two outlaws.

"Now that we have located this viper's nest, and know that there's a way out," said Diamond Dick, Jr., "I think it will stand us in hand to get out and bring a force here that will be ample enough to deal with the gang. You and I are a tolerable handful, Harry, but I don't think we're equal to the task of standing off Red Ferg and his entire outfit."

"Yore thinker, son, allers grinds out an A brand o' reason, so ef ye say pull out, why, pull out it is."

"That's what I advise."

"How do we go?"

"There's only one way to go and that's in the direction from which Perse and Clip came."

Bertie and Harry had a six-shooter each, taken from the persons of the outlaws, and it would be difficult to describe the feeling of security that went with the possession of the guns.

Bertie picked up the lantern, gave a final look to

the bonds of the prisoners, and then he and Harry started off.

"Gle-ory to snakes an' brain-twisters!" breathed Handsome Harry. "Thet ole perfessor wasn't so crack-brained, arter all. Thar is an idol, an' it makes the only entrance inter this place, aside from the means o' gittin' in an' out by the water route."

"And this is a moonshiner's retreat!" muttered Harry. "Red Ferg buys his corn of the Mexicans, steals tie timber for stove wood, and operates his still."

"An' floats his likker out by water, I reckon."

"And he's got a blast set in the idol that will throw a mountain of stone into the only opening above ground!"

"An' when thet's filled up the outlaws kin git out by the river, but can't never come back except by the cut-off, which they won't be fools enough ter try. But looky hyer, once, son."

"Well?"

"Who placed thet image up thar at the entrance an' fixed up this hyer pit fer the manufacture o' moonshine likker?"

"Red Ferg undoubtedly fixed up the pit for the moonshine business, but it's a long guess who planted the idol. Finnegan may be able to tell us."

"I'll take more stock in Finnegan arter this, I will so."

The two pards were climbing upward, all the time.

There was nothing anywhere around them but stygian blackness, made all the more impenetrable by the dim circle of lantern light by which they were surrounded.

As they walked, some one who was passing, off to the left, hailed them.

"Hello!"

"Hello yerself!" returned Diamond Dick, Jr., disguising his voice.

"Who is thet?"

"Perse an' Clip."

"Why ain't ye over thar sawin' up them ties?"

"Got ter go back fer a hammer ter fix the saw," answered Bertie, after pausing a moment to think of an excuse.

"Does it take the two of ye ter go fer a hammer?"

"Clip wouldn't stay thar alone nohow," Bertie went on. "He's skeered almost ter death."

"What about?"

"He's afeared he'll see ghosts."

"What kind er ghosts?"

"Why, of the Dicks!"

The other man swore roundly.

"Clip's an infernal coward. I'm goin' to thet lot o' ties ter look 'em over. Hurry back with the lantern, Perse, an' leave Clip in the still-room. Bring back Angus with ye."

"All right," sang out Bertie, and the man passed on.

"That means that we've got to hustle," the young sport said, in a low whisper to his old pard. "That fellow will get to the ties and find Perse and Clip. Then there'll be a how-de-do, with you and I looking two ways for a chance to skip."

The old Serpent agreed with his little pard, and they continued on almost at a run.

At last they rounded a shoulder of rock and saw a glow of light ahead; it was not artificial light, but a straggling beam from the sun itself.

The beam shot down a slope which appeared to form part of the side wall of the pit—a steep slope in which rude steps had been chiseled.

As Diamond Dick, Jr., and Handsome Harry stood still for a moment and allowed their eyes to wander from the bottom of the flight to the top, they saw how a well-placed blast, of proper proportions, would precipitate upon the long slope a terrific mass of rock and earth which hung above it.

In fact, two halves of what appeared to be the riven mountain would come together like a pair of Titanic jaws, and the pit would be closed to mankind forever.

For a brief space, the two friends stood fascinated by the spectacle of this natural freak, so stupendous in its every detail.

But they were brought to a realizing sense of their position by the sight of a man, his head bandaged, his arm in a sling, and his clothes torn, coming hastily down the long flight.

The young sport hurled the lantern against the rocks, broke it and extinguished the light.

As the wounded man took the last three steps at a jump, he collided with Harry and almost upset him.

"Who's that?"

The lantern was gone and the newcomer, just come from the light of broad day, could not see very well in the pit.

"Perse an' Clip."

"Thar's the deuce ter pay outside, Perse," said the man, excitedly.

"How so?"

"Ole Dimun Dick wasn't killed arter all! He's comin' this way at the head of his lumbermen, an' Kever, the Ouray sher'f, is with him, an' a little feller in black, who shoots ter kill every time he turns loose with his hardware."

"Where's Red Ferg?"

"He's retreatin' this way, an' he sent me on ahead ter hev Claucy make ready ter set off the blast, blow up the idol an' close the pit. Whar ye goin'?"

"Goin' up!"

"What in——"

The man was interrupted by a train of bluish fire which leaped along the bottom of the pit, like a blaze along a trail of powder.

Instantly a clangor, as of a wildly-tolling bell, jumped from side to side, and from end to end of the pit, echoes piling upon echoes.

Men seemed to spring out of the shadows all around the base of the stairway.

"Spies! spies!" rang out a hoarse voice, when the tolling of the bell had ceased.

Harry and Bertie had leaped up the stairway.

In the livid glare which now filled the pit, they could be distinctly seen.

A wild oath escaped the lips of the wounded man.

"Thar they aire!" he yelled, pointing to Harry and Bertie.

A confused shouting went up from the men at the foot of the great stairway; six leaped in pursuit of the intruders.

Bertie turned and, with a well-directed blow, knocked one of them back.

A shot was fired and went whistling upward and struck against the wall of the stairway at a point near the upper landing.

"No shooting!" roared a voice. "Ef a bullet struck one o' them powder kegs the hull bizness 'u'd be set off! Whar's Ferg? We've got ter wait fer Red Ferg!"

The shooting ceased, and the outlaws tried to take Bertie and Harry with their bare hands.

Harry, voicing his old-time war-cry, seized the first man to come within reach after the young sport had hurled the other outlaw back.

There was a moment's struggle and then the ruffian was sent tumbling back down the stairs, sweeping his companions with him and all landing in a mixed-up heap below.

"Now's our chance, Bertie!" panted the old Serpent. "Climb, boy! climb fer life!"

They put forth their best speed and had climbed to the top of the slope before their enemies below had recovered and disentangled themselves so that pursuit could be recommenced.

At the head of the stairs an oblong opening confronted them, and through the opening they saw the slope of the mountain, bare in that particular part, and outside they heard shouts, shots and other sounds of battle.

As they paused for an instant to regain their breath, the oblong opening was darkened by a giant of a man with a red beard a shade more fiery than Harry's.

This man had a wound across his cheek from which ran a dripping flow of blood.

In one of his hands was a smoking revolver.

"Who's this?" he shouted, brushing one hand across his forehead.

At that instant Bertie and Harry made out something which had escaped them before, namely, one of this man's eyebrows was red while the other was white!

Undoubtedly, this man with the smoking revolver was the notorious Red Ferg.

"What ye doin' hyer, I say?" yelled the man.

Then Diamond Dick, Jr., recognized his voice.

It was the same voice that had demanded the surrender of himself and old Diamond Dick at the hut on Pinochle Hill.

"Waitin' fer you, Red Ferg!" bellowed Handsome Harry.

The next moment he had flung himself upon the outlaw and the two were struggling in the opening.

"Set off the blast, Clancy!" shouted Red Ferg.

Barely had he given the shout when Handsome Harry forced him backward out of the opening and they fell to the ground and rolled over and over down the hill.

Bertie sprang through the doorway.

Blinded by the bright sunlight, he could see nothing and no one.

"There's one of 'em!" he heard the voice of Keever cry out. "Kill him or capture him!"

A bullet sang murderously close to the young sport's head, and he raised his hand and threw off his hat.

"Bertie!" shouted the amazed voice of old Diamond Dick.

"Diamond Dick, Jr.!" echoed the equally astounded sheriff.

"Back!" cried Bertie. "Down the hill! Quick! Your lives depend on it. It's Harry who's fighting with Red Ferg. Get them out of the way—there's not an instant to spare!"

Still all but blinded, young Diamond Dick continued to race down the hillside.

At last he reached the timber line and tripped and fell to his knees.

Turning his eyes up the slope, he saw a gigantic figure wrought out of black stone.

The figure was in standing posture and chiseled over with strange markings.

It was the idol, the idol of Tlaloc!

Not a legend, but a fact, as his eyes bore witness.

It was a hideous object, and, beyond doubt, the conception of a heathen brain and the execution of heathen hands.

The opening which led to the stairway and so to the pit was between the idol's feet and came barely to the knees.

As the young sport gazed, the great black statue seemed to crumble away as at a breath.

A sullen glow of fire shot luridly upward and was followed by a crash which made the hills rock.

The young sport was thrown at full length upon his face.

CHAPTER IX.

GOOD-BY TO TLALOC!

The young sport was but a trifle stunned, and when the earth had ceased to tremble and the debris to drop from the sky, he lifted himself and once more looked up the hill.

The great statue was gone—blown to powder, it seemed, so that not a fragment remained.

And over the spot where it had stood there was no opening whatever—the stone jaws had snapped together and forever sealed the huge pit in the bowels of the mountain.

"Bertie," said a voice, low and tense, "I had given you up."

The young sport whirled around and saw old Diamond Dick standing beside him; standing with outstretched hand and a look upon his face such as Bertie could never remember having seen there before.

The young sport clasped the veteran's hand in both his own.

"I had about given myself up," he admitted.

"I felt that there was not a doubt as to your fate," the veteran went on, "and I have pursued these timber thieves like a bloodhound, remembering only that I had lost you and Harry. Come!"

He averted his head quickly, and led Diamond Dick, Jr., to a place where Handsome Harry was standing over the form of Red Ferg.

There was a great wound in the side of the moonshiner's head, and Harry's brow was clouded as he watched the man struggling to keep the breath of life.

"It's up with him," the old Serpent was saying to Kever and Finnegan, who were close by. "A rock from the blow-up kim smashing at us while we was hevin' our set-to, an' instid o' hittin' me the rock struck Red Ferg."

Suddenly Red Ferg opened his eyes and the professor knelt down.

"Hanchett!" came gaspingly from the moonshiner's lips, as, with his failing strength, he struck at the professor's head.

The blow fell short, and the rage that convulsed Red Ferg's face was terrible to witness.

"Traitor! scoundrel! Ef I had my strength, I'd choke out yer miserable life!"

It required an effort for Red Ferg to speak the words, and they came forth in a spasm of fury.

"Yes," said the professor, with a grim smile, "Hanchett, otherwise Abe Naylor, of the Secret Service!"

The effect upon the moonshiner was something wonderful to behold.

"Naylor! Are ye givin' it to me straight?"

"Straight as a die."

"An' ye come among us, an' made yerself one of us, jest ter come back an' run me in?"

"Yes."

"Ye're plucky—jest about the kind of a chap ter train with the Dicks. I kin recognize a brave man when I see him. I ain't got no kick comin'—it's the fortunes o' war. Men as makes their livin' by their wits an' lawless methods has got ter expect a finish like this. But the pit's closed fer all time. Them as aire inside 'll git out an' find a way inter Mexico. But no one thet's outside 'll ever git in."

"I know that."

Diamond Dick had listened to this colloquy with not a little astonishment.

But he did not neglect the main point in his own indictment against the moonshiners and timber thieves.

"Who killed my employee, Red Ferg? The man at the mill."

"I did, Dimun Dick, but it war a mistake. We wanted the ties and we didn't want ter kill no one."

"What did you want of the ties?"

"He wanted them for stove wood," put in Diamond Dick, Jr.

Diamond Dick had other questions he wanted to ask, but Red Ferg suddenly straightened out as he lay, and every one knew that his evil life had come to an end.

"You gentlemen will please bear witness to the death of this notorious individual," said Naylor. "I have been after him for two months. I would have taken him alive, if I could, but it was not to be. If some of your lumbermen will carry his body back to camp, Diamond Dick, we will give it decent burial, as befits a brave man, although a lawless one."

There was hardly one of Diamond Dick's lumbermen but had a wound of some kind to show, but none of them had been slain, or even very seriously injured.

Poor Gabe Benson had been the only one to lose his life.

The lumbermen, somewhat against their inclina-

tions, made shift to carry the dead outlaw across the rugged country which separated them from the camp.

The Diamond Dicks, Keever, Naylor and Handsome Harry followed

Before leaving the scene, Naylor turned and looked up at the place where the idol had stood and where now the opened seam in the mountain had closed for all eternity.

"That image, as you have all seen," said the detective, "was a reality and not a myth. I don't know how many hundred years ago it was chiseled out of the soft black stone, but if report is to be believed, the placing of it in this spot, over the entrance to the pit, was the work of Jesuit priests who used the statue to mark, what they believed, the entrance to the infernal regions.

"In times of Indian uprisings, the Jesuits would take refuge in the pit and would be perfectly safe.

"Not a murderous Indian would dare to approach the idol, fearing the vengeance of the god.

"And now it is good-by to Tlaloc! Many an Eastern museum would have paid well to secure the idol, but to remove it would have been an impossibility. It was chiseled from a soft, powdery stone which would stand the erosion of time, but could not survive a blast like that set off in the pit's entrance."

"Were there many men in the pit?" asked old Diamond Dick.

"A dozen or more," put in Bertie.

"Is there no way that they could be captured?"

"Absolutely none," said Naylor, as they turned and started away. "To get out now will be comparatively easy, but to get back in is beyond the power of any human being.

"As an illicit distillery, the pit has ceased to be of any consequence whatever. Its usefulness in that direction is past. Part of my work was to destroy it, but the outlaws took the work out of my hands."

"Thar's at least one bar'l o' prime red-eye down thar," remarked Handsome Harry, "an' I wouldn't mind bein' shut up with it a spell, myself."

"There is more than one barrel down there, I make no doubt," said Naylor.

"And there are about two hundred ties belonging to Diamond Dick," added Bertie.

"Which, I suppose," chimed in the veteran, "will be a total loss."

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

After the return to the lumbermen's camp, Red Ferg was buried, Dick and his friends had rest and refreshment, and late in the afternoon recrossed the river on Bud Priestly's ferryboat and started for Ouray.

Fritz and Two-Spot had been left at the saw-mill to help care for the horses, so they rode back with the Dicks from that point.

They were somewhat disgruntled to think they had had such a small share in the doings of the expedition, and it required all of the Tenton's don't-worry resolutions to keep him from boiling over and expressing himself.

Mutual explanations were indulged in, on the return trip, and the wonderful narrative which Bertie and Handsome Harry had to tell was listened to with even more interest than was the story told by the detective.

And Naylor's yarn was exciting enough to please anybody.

He told how he had been commissioned to find out where the illicit whisky was coming from, and how he had posed as a ruffian in search of a job, and had been hired by Red Ferg himself in the town of Las Tablas.

He told, also, how he had mingled with the moonshiners in their underground rendezvous, had watched them work, and had been discovered while trying to set off a charge of powder which was to wreck the illicit still.

He was made a prisoner for that attempt, and was sentenced by the outlaw chief to be killed. In the eleventh hour a friend among the outlaws came to his rescue, released him, and he had swam across the Rapid River and made his escape.

During the crossing of the river he had been shot and severely wounded, and found it necessary to return to Medicine Hat, where he had his home, and recuperate before again taking the field against Red Ferg.

Thinking it might stand him in good stead to pose as the chief of the moonshiners, if certain events came to pass, he had had one of his eyebrows whitened, thus making himself something of a martyr to his duty.

But the events he had anticipated did not come to pass, and he only suffered detention and delay, because of his whitened eyebrow—as in the case of Chuck Evans.

Diamond Dick wondered why Naylor had not explained matters to Evans, and so have avoided arrest on the ground of being Red Ferg, and put the question to the detective.

Naylor's reply was that he did not wish to go out of his character of Professor Finnegan, even though his long list of delays in getting to Custer's Canyon was to be capped with a final hang-up of two days at the deputy sheriff's ranch.

Dick blamed the Secret Service man for not revealing his identity when he had presented the letter from Oliver, but Naylor averred that it was not necessary at that time, and stated that he had intended to reveal himself in case the Dicks showed any hesitancy in helping him.

But the raid of the moonshiners on the old veteran's tie pile had taken Diamond Dick and his pals directly to the place where the detective wanted them to go, for the latter felt positive that the gang of timber thieves and the gang of moonshiners were one and the same.

And Naylor had been of the utmost service to old Diamond Dick; for the veteran and Kever, upon leaving the overhanging rock in the cut-off, had been met by the detective near the saw-mill and led to the image of Tlaloc, where the young sport and Handsome Harry had been met and rescued.

When near the huge idol, Diamond Dick and his

followers had encountered Red Ferg and several of his men.

All the moonshiner's force had been slain except two—the leader, himself, and the wounded man whom he had sent into the pit to warn Clancy to be ready to set off the blast which was to close the entrance.

After remaining two or three days in Ouray, Naylor left for Denver to make his report.

Before he left, the detective had the pleasure of meeting Chuck Evans.

Evans, on reaching his ranch with Escomb, had found his prisoner gone and only the note left in the house by Dick to account for the disappearance.

Very much wrought up to find that the Dicks had plucked a possible \$500 reward out of his hands, Chuck Evans struck nothing but high places between his ranch and Ouray.

It required very little to pacify him, although he asked the same question which had been put by the veteran: Why hadn't Naylor revealed his identity?

Nor was the deputy exactly satisfied with Naylor's explanation.

In some respects, this deal which the Dicks had had jointly with the Secret Service man, covered some of the most novel features which they had ever met with in their long and varied experiences on the frontier.

And the idol of Tlaloc, whose very existence was so long a baffling mystery, and the great pit in the mountain, were not the least of these unique features.

And as for Custer's Canyon, the close call which the old veteran and the young sport had had there was something they could never forget.

THE END.

The next issue of this Weekly (No. 291) will contain the story entitled, "Diamond Dick's Mid-Air Fight; or, At Odds with the Circus Crooks."

A corker, boys. Don't miss it. Diamond Dick had an awful fight with a circus crook in the swinging basket of a rising balloon. Look out for it next week.

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LOOK ON THE BACK COVER OF No. 293 FOR A
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If you enter this contest you will have a chance for the finest and most complete assortment of Fishing Tackle ever offered.

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AMATEUR JOURNALISM CONTEST

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SEVEN COMPLETE OUTFITS GIVEN AWAY.

HERE ARE FULL DIRECTIONS:

Take any incident you can think of. It may be a fire, a runaway, an accident, an adventure, or even a murder. It doesn't matter whether you were there or not. Write it up as graphically as you can, make it full of "action," and send it to us. The article should not be over 500 words in length. The Contest closes September 1st. Send in your stories at once, boys. All the best ones will be published during the progress of the contest. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name.

Cut out the accompanying Coupon, and send it, with your story, to the DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY, Care of STREET & SMITH, 238 William Street, New York.

No contribution with which a Coupon is not enclosed will be considered.

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Diamond Dick Weekly Amateur Journalism Contest No. 4

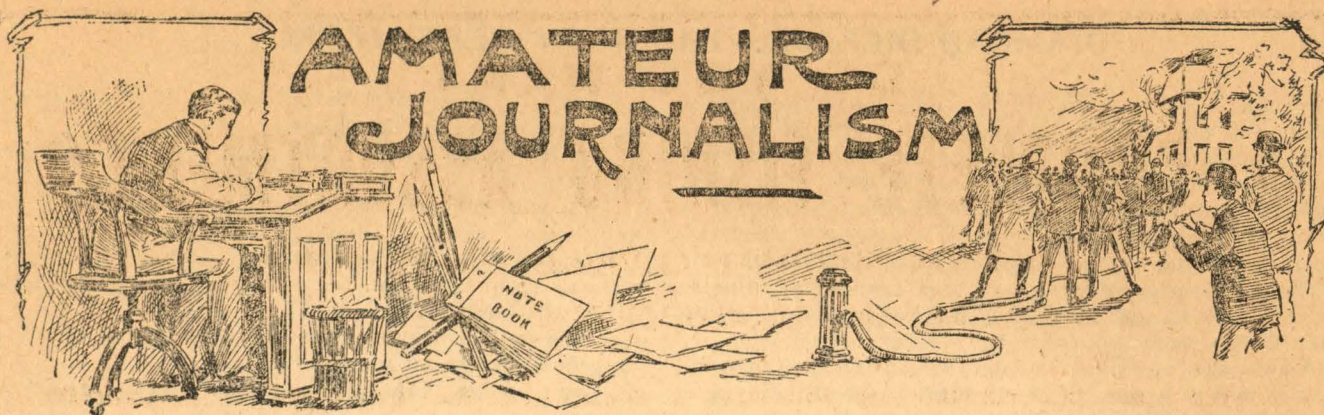
Name

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City or Town

State

Title of Story



Just take a look at the opposite page. What do you think of that offer, boys? Watch for the photographs to appear on the back cover of 293. Take another look at the announcement, and then you'll get right into the contest without being told.

It's going to be the biggest contest yet, boys! Bear that in mind, and get a hustle on!

An Adventure with a Wildcat.

(By M. H. Andrews, N. Y.)

One morning in the month of October a party of three chums and myself went out for a fox hunt on Mound Harcoe, a very thickly-wooded ridge in the northern Catskills. We were all well armed, each having a trusty rifle and a hunting-knife. We also had two foxhounds that were the pride of our party.

After we had traveled for several miles without much luck we reached the mountain we were in search of. We halted for a short time to let the dogs run a little and then we started to ascend the ridge, each keeping a close watch.

We knew we were in the region of the black bear, panther and wildcat. We traveled this way for some time when suddenly one of our dogs came over to us with yelps and barks which I knew were no false alarm.

Turning, I saw, several yards ahead, a monstrous wildcat in a hollow tree.

We were all in a fever of excitement. We rushed to the tree, which we no more than reached when the brute sprang on the back of one of our party and viciously tore his clothes and flesh. I lowered my rifle and fired at the cat, but missed, and the bullet lodged in the leg of one of my party.

One of the other boys, seeing I had missed, succeeded in wounding the wildcat twice in the back with his knife. With a yell, it released its victim and made a rush into the woods. I left the two wounded men together and took the other boy and started in close pursuit. We went for some time without gaining, when the cat turned on the dogs. I leveled my rifle and fired again, but to my ill luck killed one of the dogs.

With this bad shot I came to my senses and seeing the cat was getting weak from the loss of blood from the wounds in his back I started on a fast run and soon came close enough to get a good target, I again lowered my rifle, took a steady aim, fired, and with a deafening yell the brute sprang into the air and fell dead.

Both of us being considerably exhausted, we sat down by our prey for a short rest, after which we lashed the monster to my back, bade a sad farewell to our old and faithful foxhound, Spruce, and started to find the rest of

our party which we soon did—but in a critical condition.

One was badly torn around the neck and shoulder by the wildcat, and the other was very weak from the loss of blood from the wound made by the bullet just above the knee. Being unable to walk, we made a low stretcher and loaded him and our wildcat onto it, and with our heavy load reached home very late in the night.

I will say that the wounded boys came around all right, and we have had several hunts since.

"Jake."

(By Frank L. Von Au, Mich.)

The sun was beating hotly down upon a tumble-down shanty, about 500 yards or so from the little mining town of Rearing Gulch, so called from the little creek that at stated seasons became a roaring, swirling mass of water, sweeping through the canyon. In front of the cabin a middle-aged, gawky-looking miner, with fiery red hair and whiskers, was idly whittling a small piece of wood, now and then spitting out a quantity of cut plug juice to emphasize the remarks he was making to a neighbor, who had walked over to chat with him a while. Jake Cummings had located this gulch, the richest in that section, but had been dispossessed by a party of roving miners, and forced to retire to this little place, where he could hardly make enough to keep body and soul together. The leader of the miners had been Arizona Bill, a cutthroat of the worst character.

Jake, averse to fighting, had peaceably conceded his rich find to the ruffians, and was regarded by them as a coward, and one who could be imposed on.

"As I was sayin'," continued Jake to his neighbor, "if ther creek should rise afore mornin', them Chinese thet air comin' hyer to-morrow will land on those rocks in ther rapids below, before they kin think twice. Thet ferryboat of Lem Sing's is nary good, only fit for kindlin'."

"Let them go," exclaimed Bill, with an oath. "What's a couple of Chinks, anyway?"

Next morning bright and early, Jake was out at his

diggings, working as if for life, hopelessly hunting for what was not there. At last, discouraged, he stopped and leaned on his pick. At that moment he observed Lem Sing making his way across the creek with great difficulty, as it was rapidly swelling on account of a heavy rain during the night. Lem managed to reach the other side in safety, and commenced to return with four of his Chinese passengers. A large number of miners, knowing the danger, stood looking on curiously, while Lem slowly pushed out into the stream.

An instant later and the boat, seized by the current, shot down the stream at lightning speed, and was smashed to pieces against the rocks. It all happened in a moment, and four lives had been blotted out, while Lem's dirty yellow face was seen rearing itself above the water next to the rock on which the boat had struck.

The water, rushing and boiling around Lem, was slowly loosening his hold upon the rock. Only a couple of minutes and all would be over. Jake had dashed into the cabin, only to reappear with a coil of rope in his hands. "It's too far to throw," exclaimed Arizona Bill, as he saw Jake go toward the water. Jake did not answer, but handed one end of the rope to his companion Ben, and gave him some instructions.

Bill now comprehended what he intended doing, and drawing a six-shooter, bade him stop. Jake calmly drew a gun, and said:

"Bill, you have hounded me long, have dispossessed and threatened me, but don't try to stop me now, or, by the eternal stars! I'll shoot ye dead."

Bill, awed and abashed, drew back. Taking tight hold of the rope, Jake turned round and said:

"Good-by, boys!" then jumped.

The current whirled him down the creek like a top, but going past the rock where Lem still struggled for life, he managed to throw him the rope, by means of which Lem was drawn out of danger. Poor Jake was never heard of more, but his memory has always been cherished at Roaring Gulch.

When the Dice Rolled Wrong.

(By Rex Perine, New Orleans, La.)

Scene: A room off the bar of the Rudolph Hotel, on the Texas side of Texarkana, that hustling little city, half in Arkansas and half in Texas.

A motley crowd of men and boys were gathered 'round the crap table.

"It's up to you, sir," declared the dealer, tossing the dice to a tall man, who looked as if he had come off a Western Texas ranch.

The man put his hand in his pocket and brought out two bills, both fives, and throwing one on the green cloth of the table, picked up the dice.

"You shoot the five?" inquired the dealer.

"It all goes," growled the man: "eh, pard?" turning his bloodshot eyes to a companion at his elbow.

Then he rolled the dice out on the green cloth.

One only rolled a short distance and stopped, the side up being "six"; the other rolled the full length of the table, and also stopped on six.

"Craps," came the low-toned voice of the dealer, as his helper raked in the stakes.

The bloodshot eyes of the man who lost glittered viciously.

"As you crapped, the bones are still yours, if you want them," declared the dealer.

The man with the bloodshot eyes picked up the dice with his right hand and tossed his remaining five-dollar bill on the table with his left.

A rum-soaked rounder near the other end of the table flung down a two-bit piece.

"Come seven, come eleven, stay away craps," he shouted.

The man with the bloodshot eyes tossed out the dice.

As before, one rolled only a short distance and stopped the side up being "two" the other stopped against a small piece of wood—part of a toothpick or match—but it did not stop flat, being balanced on a corner by the little piece of wood. The side nearest up was "five."

"Seven-up," shouted the man with the bloodshot eyes and the rum-soaked rounder both together.

"Oh, no," asserted the dealer, "the dice rolled wrong, and it does not count at all, either way."

"Curse you, that's a seven!" shouted the crap player.

"It isn't anything when the dice roll wrong," declared the dealer, tossing the dice back to him. "Come, roll again."

With a deep curse, the man picked up the "bones," and again rolled them out on the green cloth.

They both stopped at the same time, and it was seen that he had "crapped" again, for one of the dice was "one," the other "two."

The dealer's helper raked in the stakes and the dealer tossed the dice back.

"You can back 'em up again, if you wish," he said.

"You cursed hellhound!" shouted the man with the bloodshot eyes, "I rolled seven before. Yes, I'll back 'em up again—this way," and his hand sought his hip pocket, coming out again with a revolver.

The dealer, the dealer's helper and the companion of the man who lost also drew their shooters, but the dealer and the companion of the man who lost were not quick enough, for when the guns spoke the dealer fell back with a bullet in his brain, and the companion of the man who lost dropped to the floor with a bullet wound in his breast, the bullet in his lungs. He died within the hour.

Of course, the others in the room scattered as soon as the revolvers appeared, and then the police came.

The man who lost cast his eyes around, seeking a way to escape, but two policemen captured him before he could leave the room.

The dealer's helper escaped to the street, and started on a run for Arkansas, but was captured by the sheriff before he was within a block of State Line Street.

The next morning two bodies, cold, stiff and stark, were lying in the Texarkana morgue; two prisoners were in the Texarkana jail, charged with murder—and the little compartment off the barroom of the Rudolph Hotel was closed.

And none of those who were present at the time will ever forget what happened that night, when the dice rolled wrong.

My First Hunt.

(By Lloyd Arthur, Pa.)

Four of my playmates and I went out to hunt 'possums.

I was armed with a revolver and the rest had guns. We went into the woods and found a tree in which there was a 'coon instead of a 'possum. I fired, but the 'coon jumped and knocked my companion over and would have bitten him if I had not fired and killed the animal.

We left the field, and in less than ten minutes we saw a farmer and sold the 'coon for fifty cents. We came along through a field, and there was a bull in the field, and one of the boys had a red sweater on, and he threw a stone and the bull came along furiously.

They all got over the fence safely but me. I hid myself in the bushes near the fence, and then stepped through a hole in the fence, and I got home in an hour, hungry, tired and sore from bruises.

A Terrible Explosion.

(By Roy Harlison, Ohio.)

It was the day before Christmas and the town was bustling with the usual excitement that prevails at this season of the year. As it was early in the day, there were not many people on the streets, and it was well that

there were but few people astir, for, otherwise, the fatalities would have been frightful.

About eight-thirty o'clock a terrible roar burst upon the air—a roar so deafening and so jarring that it broke into fine bits ten large plate-glass windows of the adjoining structures.

When I arrived upon this terrible scene of ruin, some people were carrying the prostrate form of Carl Shields to a nearby cab. He was taken to the hospital, where he died later in the day. This lad had been buying Christmas presents and was on his way home when the fateful explosion, that blotted out his young life so quickly, occurred. He was passing almost directly in front of the building when he was forcibly thrown to the sidewalk, his head hitting the curbstone.

Another boy was near the building at the time, and he was blown half-way across the street, but was not hurt beyond a severe jarring.

A plumber was under the building hunting for a gas leak, and it is claimed that he was the cause of the explosion. His face and hands were burned severely.

Two old people, a man and his wife, who had charge of the store, were sleeping just above, and it is almost a miracle that they were not killed outright.

The building is now undergoing a complete reconstruction and will soon be ready for use again.

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A DESPERATE COMBAT.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

Two days after passing through Behring's Straits we, the crew of the whaler Fingal, of New London, experienced a heavy gale, that made the old ship tremble and quiver as if about to fly into a thousand pieces.

All around us were fragments of ice, with some of which we frequently came in contact. Every blow from these masses made the craft reel and her timbers crack, while the force of the shock nearly threw the men from their feet. One poor fellow, who had gone aloft to arrange a gasket that had blown loose, was thrown from the foot rope to the deck, breaking a leg, and spraining his arm severely.

We had at the wheel two good men, who were obliged to exert almost superhuman strength and activity to prevent the ship from running afoul of some of the larger, more solid bergs, which would have crushed her bows like an eggshell.

Ahead of us, however, there was a large floe, which we feared we could not avoid, although the captain had crowded all the sail he could bear, hoping to edge off to windward of it. The huge topsails, filled almost to bursting by the gale, seemed to threaten every moment to carry away our masts, which kept creaking and cracking with every pitch and roll of the vessel.

We kept nearing the floe with tremendous velocity. There it was, now less than a league ahead of us the huge bergs looming high, and the great seas dashing against them, with the roar of a thousand thunderbolts. All along the edge of the floe the water was tossed into sheets of hissing spray, rising hundreds of feet into the air.

Soon we were within twenty fathoms of the dangerous masses, when it became evident that we would not clear them.

The first mate, a long-limbed Sag Harborman, standing six feet four in his stockings, and accounted one of the best seamen that ever trod a ship's deck, now sprang to the wheel. His quick eye had detected, through the floe, a narrow passage, leading diagonally to the clear space of water beyond. Into this passage, while all the rest of the men were expecting the ship would be dashed

to pieces, he directed the vessel by suddenly raising up the wheel, and kept her steadily along to the clear water.

While all hands, thankful for their narrow escape, were watching the receding floe, the man on the lookout was heard screaming at the top of his voice:

"Sail O!—of a wreck off there in the ice!"

Glancing astern, we then beheld what had hitherto, owing to interposing walls of ice, been hidden from our sight, the dismantled hull of a ship, driven along through the ice. Upon the quarterdeck, clinging to some rigging, we saw a girl whom the captain, looking through his glass, soon pronounced young and beautiful.

"We must save her!" he shouted.

"Next to impossible!" cried the mate. "Still, I'm willing to go down and try with the larboard boat."

A whale boat can live in a very rough sea. Being made of light material, however, it is easily stove.

The mate lowered with a stout crew, who, pulling vigorously, soon were alongside the floe. There were many very narrow passages between the bergs, and into one of these the boat was directed.

Crash! came a heavy ice-block, falling upon it, and over went the boat!

The crew, clinging to the bottom, soon righted their craft and took to their oars, glad of the exercise after their immersion. In spite of all his exertions, however, the mate found it impossible to keep his boat clear of the ice, which, closing round it, soon stove it to pieces.

The crew had escaped by crawling out upon a large berg, and now, clinging to the projections with half-frozen fingers, they watched their ship, which had been signaled, and from which they momentarily expected to behold a boat approaching to their rescue. In fact a boat soon was lowered, but before it had more than half accomplished the league between the castaways and their vessel, it was hidden from sight by thick fog clouds, which had gradually been gathering along the horizon.

Carried along by wind and current, the party on the ice vainly waited for the boat.

This must have passed them in the fog, for the roar of the wind drowned their shouts and also the blast of their boathorn, which they had continued to sound.

They passed a dreary night.

The gale abated by morning to a moderate breeze, and the fog had cleared. They saw no sign of their ship, however, but glancing astern of them, they beheld the wreck, seen on the previous day, wedged in between the ice drifts. It lay over almost upon its beam ends, some of the bergs rising above the bow, and the bulwarks amidships.

"Ay, ay, now," said the mate, looking at the wreck through his glass. "I see no sign of the girl we saw yesterday. What can have become of her?"

"Perhaps we can get to the wreck over the bergs," said William Clyde, his harpooner, a tall, good-looking young fellow of twenty-five. "We can then easily find out if she's aboard."

"True," answered the mate, "but who'd risk getting to the wreck over them bergs ahead, which are most too far apart to be jumped?"

"I will go," said Clyde. "I think I can leap them."

"Well, if you think you can, you may go; but I would not undertake it."

The young man, thrusting the boat hatchet in his belt, started at once. Possessed of uncommon agility, he continued, though not without great exertion and some very narrow escapes, to leap the bergs between him and the wreck. Arrived aboard, he glanced round him, but saw no animated being of any kind except a seal, which was seated upon the weather rail. He descended into the cabin, which was deserted. Then he made his way to the forecabin, which he also found empty. He had returned to the deck, and was about lifting one of the hatches, to inspect the hold, when he heard a deep, smothered growl, apparently right beneath him. Wondering, he paused and listened, to hear the sound repeated several times. Then he lifted the hatch and glanced down, to behold a most unexpected sight. Directly beneath him was a huge white bear, whose legs had become entangled in some coils of rigging, from which the creature was endeavoring to extricate itself.

At the same moment the young man distinguished the voice of a female.

"Help! help! help!"

He sprang at once into the hold, when, in one corner, shrinking behind a cask, he beheld a beautiful young girl of eighteen. Her whole countenance was full of terror, and she trembled from head to foot. She was so situated that she could not leave her narrow quarters without passing close to the bear, which, it was evident, was eager to spring upon and devour her.

With a fierce growl, the animal made a snap at Clyde, as he was passing it, but luckily its teeth only caught in his coat.

He vainly endeavored to disengage himself, the bear holding on with a vice-like grasp; so, lifting his hatchet, he aimed a furious blow at the creature's head. He missed his aim, and the blade of the weapon, striking the ropes in which the bear's legs were entangled, severed them, setting the ferocious beast at liberty!

Now then the animal, throwing himself upon his enemy, clasped him in his paws, when his adversary drove his sheath knife to the hilt in the creature's stomach. The bear, however, having already planted two of its front teeth in the sailor's shoulder, bore him down. It must then have fared hard with the young man, but

for the coils of large rope among which he had fallen, and which kept off the bear's paws and teeth.

The animal seemed to grow fiercer every moment as its life-blood flowed. Snapping and snarling, twisting itself from side to side, it kept the young man prostrate in such a position that he could not use his arms. Soon the beast gave a hoarse, prolonged growl, and then opened its jaws wide to grasp the head of its adversary.

Clyde, having by this time recovered the use of the arm which held the hatchet, lifted his weapon and struck the bear's jaw a furious blow. Before he could repeat it the hatchet was knocked from his grasp by a stroke from one of the animal's forepaws. Then down came the bristling jaws to close over the young man's head, when the girl, who, hitherto held motionless from mingled feelings of surprise, terror and anxiety, had not moved, caught up the hatchet, and with the strength lent by feverish excitement, struck the bear a heavy blow upon the neck. Considerably weakened from loss of blood, the bear, now staggering, fell partly upon its side, when, springing quickly to his feet, and snatching the hatchet from the girl's hand, Clyde finished the bear with a few blows.

From the noble girl, whose life he had saved, and who had been the means of saving his, he now learned that the name of the wreck was the Mt. Vernon. When, at night, her crew became convinced that she would be driven into the ice, they lowered the boats, the captain remaining aboard the last man, and his daughter insisting to remain with him. Finally the captain stepped into the boat, and was about helping his daughter in after him, when, owing to the furious roll of the ship, the ropes attached to the boats parted, causing them to drift clear of the wreck, leaving the young girl still aboard. Since then she had seen nothing of the boats.

The bear had crawled on deck from one of the bergs among which the craft was jammed, and, as shown, the girl had tried to escape him by running into the hold. The bear followed, and must soon have overtaken her, but for the ropes in which it became entangled. It had remained in this situation for an hour when Clyde came aboard, and doubtless must soon have extricated itself and devoured its intended victim, but for the young sailor's timely arrival.

I have only to add that the Fingal hove in sight before noon, and that Clyde, with the young girl and his shipmates soon was picked up.

Subsequently it was ascertained that the Mt. Vernon's crew had succeeded in gaining the shores of an island off the Esquimaux coast, from which they were picked up by a French whaler.

Words may not express the intense joy of the wrecked captain when he finally clasped to his bosom the daughter whom he had given up for lost. He thanked her preserver warmly, and the two soon became great friends.

A year later, William Clyde married the daughter of the Mt. Vernon's captain—Thomas Aston, of New Bedford—and I have every reason to believe that the twain lead a happy life.

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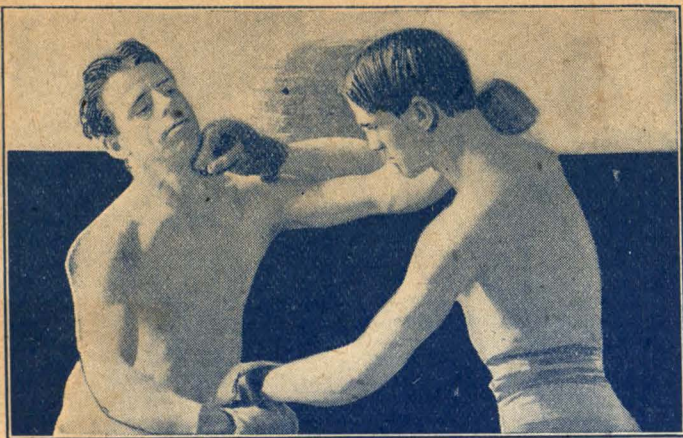
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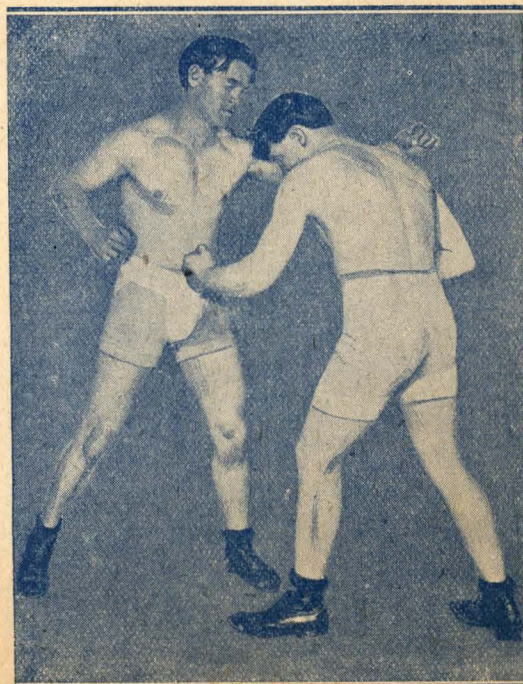
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